UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Philosophical Psychology of William James and Ludwig Wittgenstein

by

Matthew H. Stephens ©

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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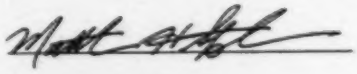

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research on September 26, 2001.

The ultimate of ultimate problems, of course, in the study of the relations of thought and brain, is to understand why and how such disparate things are connected at all. But before that problem is solved (if it ever is solved) there is a less ultimate problem which must first be settled. Before the connection of thought and brain can be explained, it must at least be *stated* in an elementary form; and there are great difficulties about so stating it.

William James, *The Principles of Psychology*

A philosopher says 'Look at things like this!' – but in the first place this doesn't ensure that people will look at things like that, and in the second place his admonition may come too late; it's possible, moreover, that such an admonition can achieve nothing in any case and that the impetus for such a change in the way things are perceived has to originate somewhere else entirely.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, manuscript remark

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Philosophical Psychology of William James and Ludwig Wittgenstein* submitted by Matthew Hylton Stephens in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. W. E. Cooper

Dr. Bruce A. Hunter

Dr. Bernard Linsky

Dr. Russell B. Goodman

Dr. Leendert Mos

This work is dedicated to two Elizabeths, one present, one past. Both undoubtedly colouring my future.

Abstract

The thesis of this essay is that Wittgenstein's later work, particularly the *Philosophical Investigations* [1953], is a form of radical empiricism in the mold of William James. To make this connection clear, James's philosophical psychology is first explicated, and then situated in a larger philosophical theory. Following this, the use of James's text *The Principles of Psychology* [1890] as it appears in *Philosophical Investigations* is subjected to close analysis. It is argued that Wittgenstein significantly misreads James on a number of crucial issues, obscuring the relations between the two philosophers' views on the nature of mind and the status of psychology as a science. Once the textual connections between James and Wittgenstein have been made clear, an argument for the convergence of the two positions on various ontological and semantic issues is put forward. James's notion of 'pure experience' is likened to Wittgenstein's discussion of 'language games', with grammatical connections in the latter's view replacing the experiential links James thought essential to maintain the felt continuity of one's moment-to-moment awareness.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been far too long in the making, but throughout its composition I have been fortunate not only to have had timely advice and inspiration, but the friendship and support so necessary to intellectual endeavours. I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Wes Cooper for his many helpful thoughts, patient remarks and enquiries, and his unflagging enthusiasm regarding this project. I would also like to thank him and his spouse Kate for their wonderful friendship, which has greatly enriched my experience in Alberta. The other members of the examining committee have all, in various ways, deepened my appreciation for the ideas at issue here, and for philosophy generally, and the humanity and humour with which this was done will not be forgotten. Life here in the department of philosophy was made particularly enjoyable by the presence of Anita Theroux and Wendy Minns, and I would like to thanks them for their many kindnesses, and for the overall warmth they bring to this learning evironment.

To my friends and family, all of whom have patiently endured my struggling through this degree, and have kept my own humour from darkening too much, I would like to express my deep affection and gratitude. I hope that during this period I have not been untrue to any of you. I thank my dear Dad for exhibiting the delight about all this that I cannot, and for preserving the sentiments and memory of my Mother, who would have been most proud. I would in particular like to thank Bert Almon and Olga Costopolis-Almon, Lesley and Victor Jackson, and Susan and Terry Leier for opening their homes to both myself and Bess and making me feel at peace, if only for the short time that the inevitable guilt of graduate studies ('I ought to be working right now') has not been colouring my thoughts. We look forward to returning the favour.

To my closest friends, Brendan, Amanda, John, Claire, Mark, Wesley, Trevor, Chris, Angela, Michelle, Allan, Liana, Karen, Nick, Yaw and everyone else who has shared in this fool's progress, I say thank you, most sincerely. Let there be many more good times ahead.

Of course my debts to Bess are limitless, and should not be expressed here. She knows that these "are private words, addressed to you in public."

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List of Abbreviations

Works by James

Principles or PP	*The Principles of Psychology* (1890)
MT	*The Meaning of Truth* (1909)
DCE	"Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" (1904, republished in ERE)
AWPE	"A World of Pure Experience" (1904, republished in ERE)
ERE	*Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912)
MEN	*Manuscript Essays and Notes* (1988)
P:BC	*Psychology: Briefer Course* (1892)
Varieties	*The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)
SPP	*Some Problems of Philosophy* (1911)
WB	*The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897)

All works dated after 1910 were published posthumously.

Works by or about Wittgenstein

BB	*The Blue and Brown Books* (1958)
Investigations	*Philosophical Investigations* (1953)
OC	*On Certainty* (1969)
Tractatus	*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922)
RPP 1, 2	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (2 vols.)
Baker & Hacker, Hacker	*Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations* (4 vols.) Volumes one and two by G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker; volumes three and four by P. M. S. Hacker.
Companion	*A Companion to Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* by G. Hallett, S. J.

All works by Wittgenstein, with the exception of *Tractatus*, were published posthumously. References to manuscript or typescript numbers follow the catalogue of G. H. von Wright, reproduced in *Philosophical Occasions*. See the bibliography for each chapter for publication details.

Italics found in quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are those of the original author. Square brackets indicate editorial amendments by the present author.

Introduction

The thesis of this essay is that Wittgenstein's later work, particularly the *Philosophical Investigations* [1953][1], is a form of radical empiricism in the mold of William James. This thesis deals with a simple position that is entangled in a number of quandaries. To begin, while it is easy enough to spell out the claims made by a radical empiricist, the doctrine, as we find it in practice philosophically, manifests itself in complex ways. The doctrine straddles many traditional distinctions and ramifies widely across disciplinal boundaries, touching many well-worn questions in philosophy, and particularly in what we now know as philosophy of mind. A solid understanding radical empiricism requires some careful laying out of its parts.

Claiming that Wittgenstein held a metaphysical position of any description runs up against an interpretive tradition that honors Wittgenstein with a place in our canon precisely because he eschewed metaphysics in all its forms. Though I think this an oversimplification, ripe for plucking, it is not my task to argue this point strenuously. Instead I rely on previous interpreters who give my argument the support I need, and add to their thoughts some new claims of my own. In brief, I argue that while Wittgenstein may have rejected a group of traditional metaphysical views, radical empiricism characterizes his own position (as it shows itself) quite well, and it escapes the critical net cast by the author of the *Investigations*.

If one is to make a plausible case for Wittgenstein being a radical empiricist, it must be shown that he was at least exposed to (if not consciously aware of) some of the relevant ideas or parts of the larger position. This might seem a strange claim, but I believe that the current opinion of the vast majority of interested philosophers weighs heavily against the thesis I propose, making my claims look adventitious if there is not a reasonable causal 'backstory' to set my picture in relief. While I do not argue for any substantive influence on the part of James, if I am to show the confluence I perceive in the work of Wittgenstein and James, the possibility of influence needs to be brought into view.

This possibility is very real. Only recently has it become a matter of philosophical interest to chart the ways in which Wittgenstein's reading of James's *Principles of Psychology* [1890][2] influenced the construction of *Investigations*. Furthermore, it is my opinion that, in launching an investigation of the possible confluence of Jamesian and Wittgensteinian philosophies, we are dealing with a case of 'two solitudes', not unlike the political and cultural situation of English and French-speaking Canada. As in that case, it seems that specialists in Wittgenstein's work and American pragmatism generally have a poor understanding of the developments in the other field, or the operant motivations and themes driving various

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. & trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: MacMillan, 1953), hereafter cited as *Investigations*.
[2] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981), hereafter *Principles*.

lines of interpretation. As I am trying to bring these two sub-disciplines into contact herein, I indulge in a greater amount of explication than is perhaps welcome elsewhere. However, I believe that texts ought to speak for themselves. This allows the reader to evaluate my own interpretation of passages as I build my argument, and see for themselves whether I have been unduly biased in my presentation of the facts.

I am pleased to note this is not the only *essais* of this comparative hypothesis. Dr. Russell Goodman, of the University of New Mexico, published in 1994 an article laying much of the groundwork for this dissertation. His work was somewhat broader in scope than my own, and I hope that my efforts make up for in detail what they lack for in originality. I would like to acknowledge my debt to Professor Goodman, and as he is currently publishing a book-length treatment on this topic (again, tackling this topic from a slightly different point of view) I look forward to comparing my analysis with his.

Having perhaps scuttled the *raison d'être* for my doctorate, I would like to say a few words about how this work is an original contribution to philosophical history. Unlike Dr. Goodman's article, this essay examines James and Wittgenstein on issues of metaphysics and a host of issues in philosophy of psychology, concentrating on the relationship between two works, the *Principles* and the *Investigations*. This is opposed to Goodman's project examining Wittgenstein's earlier encounter with *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the ramification of this, the *Principles*, and *Pragmatism* across the Wittgensteinian corpus. This increased scope has a different aim than the current project: the aim of Goodman's work is to compare the Jamesian and Wittgensteinian views on the importance of diversity in the examples philosophy handles, and the pragmatism this spawns. So we might say Dr. Goodman's research compares the two thinkers on normative metaphilosophy, while my efforts are more straightforwardly aimed at metaphysics and philosophy of mind. This means I take for granted, among other things, such a metaphilosophy. Thus I note that James and Wittgenstein shared a view that philosophy ought to be therapeutic (and this is a claim about philosophy's aims as well as its methods), without providing a detailed argument that they indeed felt this to be true.

It should be noted that comparisons of James and Wittgenstein have been made from time to time, and thus the project of closely examining their similarities and differences has had several false starts, the most notable being Coope, Geach, Potts and White's one-page chart listing comparative passages in *Investigations* and *Principles*.[3] Indeed, one can look back almost forty years and find brief mention of the 'Wittgenstein-James connection' in the scholarly literature. John Passmore's popular history, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* makes special note of how Wittgenstein read and admired James's *Principles*, and other authors have emphasized the importance of reading *Principles* if one is to have a clear view of

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[3] *A Wittgenstein Workbook*, University of California Press, 1970, appendix.

Investigations.[4] Indeed, after the *Tractatus* and Frege's work, I would say the *Principles* is the most important supplement to our understanding of Wittgenstein's later work. This is far from a common view.

Structure of the Dissertation

I have attempted to tackle these quandaries in a sequence that I hope is natural and logical to the reader, and allows for the give-and-take necessary for a comparative thesis of this scope.

Chapter one deals with a limited issue within James's larger philosophy. Specifically, I examine the nature of consciousness as James saw it, and this explication has three parts. To begin I look at the essay "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?", the flagship essay from the radical empiricism period. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no attempt to do a close reading of this essay, explicating the points made in each of its sections. I thought it very important to do so, not only to contribute to James scholarship (which I think suffers from lack of scrutiny[5] of this piece), but because it exemplifies the method of radical empiricism at work. The second task is to relate this essay to the *Principles*, and I have accordingly sketched the theory of mind found therein. There is significant continuity between the two works, though this has been controversial in the past. Dr. Wes Cooper has been instrumental in restoring the view that the *Principles* has a nascent metaphysical view that gained full expression in the later writings. Dr. Cooper also points to a difficulty in the scholarly community that greatly complicates my endeavours:

> Passages can be cited in *The Principles* which support almost every kind of theory of the mind-body relationship, including materialism, Cartesian dualism, epiphenomenalism, and parallelism. The problem of rendering these passages coherent is partly solved by adopting a Two-Level interpretation of James's system: as having, first, a scientific level at which the difference between mind and body is taken for granted in the quest for psychological, cerebral, and psycho-physical laws; and second, a metaphysical level at which mind and body are understood as constructs each of us builds out of the material provided by pure experience, which is neither mental nor physical. (W. E. Cooper, *The Unity of William James's Thought*, Vanderbilt UP, forthcoming)

Much of the material presented in chapter one was first brought to my attention in his graduate seminar on James, and I am greatly indebted to his careful exegetical work on the subject. What appears here is meant not only to connect *Principles* with the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, but also to lay the groundwork for a more adventuresome portrait of James's views, in chapter two. Careful examination of the two chapters in *Principles* I consider in this initial investigation is also important because they comprise the location from

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[4] It was in the mid-sixties that memoirs from former students of Wittgenstein began to surface mentioning his fascination with *The Principles of Psychology*. See for example Wolfe Mays "Recollections of Wittgenstein" in K. T. Fann, ed., *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1967), discussed below.

[5] Many scholars mention or quote briefly from this essay, but to my knowledge no one delves deeply enough to remark upon James's comments about what many have called 'phenomenological' language in

which Wittgenstein derives many of the remarks he takes from James. While many authors in particular stress the importance of "The Stream of Thought" (*Principles*, chapter 9) for understanding Wittgenstein's reading of James[6], no one has heretofore taken the care to explicate that chapter, and some of the philosophical ideas lurking in what is ostensibly a psychological investigation. Again, I hope this is an original and useful contribution on my part.

The final part of the first chapter is an examination of some recent ideas in philosophy of mind, with the intent of fleshing out the notion of 'James the neo-Darwinist'. Gerald Edelman has quite consciously employed James in his recent work, pointing to James's vision as the inspiration of his own investigations, with James's model of the mind as his standard of success. Edelman's model of consciousness is James's updated, and he is very honest in acknowledging his debt. I mention three aspects of Edelman's work, as a means of capturing aspects of James's model that would otherwise require lengthy argumentation and exegesis. I discuss the extension of Darwinian ideas into neurology, the dividing of consciousness into 'primary' and 'higher-level' kinds, and Edelman's rather pragmatic treatment of memory. This last is included as something of an object lesson in language-games and family resemblances, two ideas I do not explicate, and it is hoped this material will serve two long-term purposes.

The discussion of Edelman's ideas is intended first of all to connect James up with our time, showing that his ideas still have potential, and that it is possible to use his ideas without abandoning the standpoint of natural science. Secondly, I hope that in showing the scientific side of James in its entirety, one might find some ground to defend his point of view against some of the Wittgensteinian criticisms I explore. (There is a tertiary point to including this material, which is not strictly essential for my thesis. I hope that the example of types of memory-systems will give the reader a good sense of the 'giddiness' Wittgenstein claims strikes one when subtle shifts in language-games are made.) My impression of the project overall is that it is weighted in favour of Wittgenstein, and pointing to Edelman can remind the reader that the question of which version of radical empiricism is most cogent is somewhat of an open question. If this is to be a fair comparison, I feel that both versions of radical empiricism must be 'live' options for our

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section seven of that essay. Thus I hope that my 'close reading' of "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" is interesting and original in its own right.

[6] Everett J. Tarbox, Jr., has published two recent essays on James and Wittgenstein that points to this chapter as supremely important, though his work does not include close examination of James's text. See "Wittgenstein, James and a Bridge to Radical Empiricism" *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 13(2) pp. 89-103 (1992) and "Linguistic Pragmatism: William James and Ludwig Wittgenstein" *ibid.*, 15(1) pp. 43-58 (1994) for his analysis. In the first essay he makes the ambitious claim that the stream of thought was the inspiration for Wittgenstein's discussion of 'river bed' propositions in *On Certainty* (§96*ff*). (David Stern points to Plato's *Theatetus* as the more likely source. *See Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995).) Tarbox's second essay is a slight extension of this investigation, arguing for ascribing a mediate position for both philosophers *vis-à-vis* the contemporary 'realism/anti-realism' debate.

consideration. Given the claims I make in concluding the dissertation, pointing to the current 'cash value' of James's view is an important corrective.

Chapter two is a portrait of James's philosophical view, in a form complete enough for our purposes, but avoiding some of the standard discussions of volition, the role of moral values and religious beliefs, and so forth. It may strike the reader that for two philosophers noted for their sympathy for religious issues (in what may be described as a spiritually barren century), I have not discussed the religious attitudes of either James or Wittgenstein. This is for the simple reason that, with one exception, matters concerning God and religious belief do not enter in to this project as I have conceived it. Thus, I portray James's 'arch' of a philosophy as including familiar matters such as ontology, epistemology, semantics, logic, and psychology and philosophy of science. While there may be room for more stones in the structure, I believe it can stand as it is herein (whatever an engineer may make of my rendering of this metaphor). As for God, it is an implicit postulate of radical empiricism that there is no place for theosophy in philosophical research.

Chapter three begins the comparative study in earnest, examining the precise use of James's remarks as they are found in the *Investigations*. This is a tricky matter in terms of interpretation, for as I make clear therein, Wittgenstein does not always read James well or fairly. To say this in one breath and then go on to say that Wittgenstein moved in James's direction takes a fair amount of clarification. It is hoped that the previous chapters do this in terms of James; along the way in chapter three I try to bring out aspects of Wittgenstein's thought that are elements—one might say symptoms—of a radical empiricist approach. The material in this chapter should establish that James was a major figure of Wittgenstein's attention in his later work, much more so than many have acknowledged, and I believe my account 'sets the record straight' on the nature of the criticisms we find Wittgenstein making.

From there we may progress to the thesis proper, and it is the task of the fourth and final chapter to state this clearly, marshalling whatever evidence and scholarly support has not be presented previously. I explore the differences between the two philosophers' brand of radical empiricism, and suggest why we might see Wittgenstein's version as an improvement over James's. Such normative claims are guided by James's vision of his philosophical *Weltanschauung*, as it appears throughout his writings. In effect I am arguing that Wittgenstein's innovations constitute a more faithful realization of the philosophical dream left unfinished at James's death.

Regarding my view of James as offering a metaphysical position that is distinctive and fairly cogent, it may be asked where the standard literature is on this matter. A brief survey will suffice to show that there are useful elements therein, but no extant work covers the exact problem with which I am concerned. For

example, John Wild[7] supports the idea that the core of James's thought can be found in *Principles*, including the ideas surfacing in the last decade of his life. Wild does the unprecedented, explicating James's thought from page one of the *Principles* to the last of the *Essays on Radical Empiricism*, but his tendency is to transform James into a phenomenologist. Aron Gurwitsch did similarly in the 1940s, as did Bruce Wilshire in the 1960s.[8] Unlike these phenomenological accounts, I attempt to explicate the scientific and metaphysical side of James, with less emphasis on his moral and religious thought. Wild's phenomenological James, in my opinion, neglects much of the background of James's emerging views. A crucial source for this resuscitation of the 'scientific' James came in the form of a *Harvard Library Bulletin* [1982] issue on James's Darwinism. The essays therein add a good deal of historical and biographical background to James's psychological work, especially his idiosyncratic reading of Darwin, and the volume constitutes a valuable corrective to earlier accounts of James. While there are more scientifically oriented interpretations of James, they too are a disappointment, ignoring James's epistemological and metaphysical views, and salvaging his commitments to empirical research at the expense of his views on human freedom and the nature of the universe. Throughout my explorations of the many books and articles on James, I have found a depressing tendency to dress him up in some form thought to be more respectable to a given audience (this tendency also breeds considerable vagueness and overly charitable interpretation). I have been guided throughout by the hypothesis that James did have a coherent philosophical worldview; I then sought evidence for such a view, adjusting my theoretical model as the evidence pointed one way or another.

Readers of the secondary literature will not disagree with the claim that much of the work on James in the past thirty years has been on his moral and religious ideas. A very good account of radical empiricism exists in the form of Patrick Dooley's *Pragmatism as Humanism*, but it is indicative of this trend in its attention to such ideas, which are not terribly relevant to the present thesis.[9] Likewise, David Lamberth's recent book on the notion of 'pure experience' includes a good survey of James's lectures and unpublished works, but fails to connect this idea with James's broader metaphysical and psychological views.[10] Thus, when working within the community of James scholars, we find little that speaks directly to the topic at hand, though there are useful bits and pieces throughout the history of the field. I have tried to indicate my debts to the efforts of previous scholars as the pertinent opportunities arise.

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[7] *The Radical Empiricism of William James* (New York: Doubleday, 1969).
[8] Aron Gurwitsch, "William James's Theory of the 'transitive parts' of the Stream of Consciousness" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1943; 3, 449-477; "On the Object of Thought (with comments)" *ibid.*, 1947; 7, 347-356; "The Phenomenological and Psychological Approach to Consciousness" *ibid.*, 1955; 15, 303-319. These are collected and revised in Gurwitsch's *The Field of Consciousness*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1964). Bruce Wiltshire, *William James and Phenomenology: A Study of The Principles of Psychology* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1968.)
[9] Patrick K. Dooley, *Pragmatism As Humanism: the philosophy of William James* (New Jersey: Littlefield Adams, 1975).

The History of Interpreting *Investigations*

Turning to Wittgenstein, the book we know as his *Philosophical Investigations* provides a number of challenges to its reader. To begin, it is not a text prepared for publication by its author, but a text edited by Wittgenstein's literary executors, and the book as it exists is a compilation of a number of different manuscripts and typescripts. While Part One consists for the most part of 693 numbered remarks (there are a number of marginal additions), Part Two is more prosaic, its composition is thought to be later than the bulk of Part One, and the author's intentions regarding its belonging in the finished text are less than clear.[11] Furthermore, Part One is itself a compilation of manuscripts from different periods and the surviving document conceals a connection with Wittgenstein's thoughts on philosophy of mathematics. The scholarly consensus is that Wittgenstein decided at some point to abandon the mathematical material in favour of philosophy of psychology, though perhaps with the intention of re-introducing the former topic in part two.[12] (For a diagram exhibiting the relations between the sources for Part One, see the Appendix to chapter three, figure 3-2.) While some commentators have been tempted to ascribe phenomenalism to Wittgenstein's late work based on remarks made to Friedrich Waismann in 1929-30 (and indeed Wittgenstein comes as close as he ever does to classic 'sense-data' phenomenalism in this period), Wittgenstein's thought changed radically soon thereafter. Accordingly, I plan to make scant use of that material. As the material that would eventually form *Investigations*, Part One, began to take shape, Wittgenstein was still formulating what would later become known as the 'private language' arguments (there are—on David Pears' reading, at least—thought to be two of them). In addition to turning away from questions about mathematics in favour of philosophical psychology, Wittgenstein's approach to this new subject matter became increasingly detailed, and this can be seen to some extent in the final text. Wittgenstein no longer lumps opining, judging, doubting, guessing, and imagining together as 'thought', as he seems to have done in the *Tractatus*. Instead, the later sections of Part One treat a wide variety of psychological concepts in their native complexity and detail, and they are further related to the questions of meaning, justification and understanding with which the text began.

Aside from the changes of mind that altered the manuscript over its sixteen-year genesis, and the fact that the book that resulted from editing by Wittgenstein's executors is controversial,[13] the text is also a product of some very intense revising on the part of its author. Many traces of Wittgenstein's influences, the causes for his way of thinking about things, have been intentionally effaced. It is a book that aims at a kind of

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[10] David Lamberth, *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999).
[11] See G. H. von Wright, "The Troubled History of Part II of the *Investigations*", *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 42 (1992).
[12] This inference is based on Wittgenstein's rather enigmatic claim in the concluding paragraph of part two that confusions in psychology are similar to those in set theory. See *Investigations*, p. 232.
[13] Peter Hacker, for example, concluded his exegesis and commentary on the *Investigations* at the end of part one, claiming part two was not part of the book Wittgenstein had intended. See Hacker's prefatory

monastic anonymity; there is little 'personality' in the text as we have it today, apart from those literary personalities presented in its dialogues. This was not simple humility: Wittgenstein, in eliminating traces of his own personal history of arriving at his conclusions, also eliminated any sign of allegiance to any recognizable philosophical school or position. His aim was to neutralize these positions by showing their common errors and their common tendency to run up against the limits of language. This goal stems from his unusual conception of philosophy, which maintains continuity with the view expressed in the *Tractatus*, though the later view does show important changes (descriptions of the details of a variety of linguistic practices—what Wittgenstein calls 'remarks on the natural history of human beings'[14]—replace an *übersichtliche* description). Simply put, this turn towards the human point of view is 'humanism' as James understood it. It is a genus within which we may locate James's radical empiricism; Wittgenstein's specific position will turn out to be a close cousin.

One of the views I take for granted (which is not central to the thesis) is the so-called 'continuity thesis', *viz*., the view that there is a large degree of continuity between the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*. This has been recognized by many scholars and further complicates interpretation of *Investigations*, for Wittgenstein himself suggested the text should be read side-by-side with his earlier work.[15] Regarding what Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker have called the Augustinian picture of language, roughly the view that all words are names, Wittgenstein singles out 'the author of the *Tractatus*' as the philosopher most deeply entranced by this picture. The *Tractatus* forms part of the prologue to the path of thinking developed in *Investigations*. It is assumed to a large extent, taken as a paradigm case of what philosophers have done since the time of the sophists. And, since Wittgenstein's style of writing is designed to be fluid (despite its numbered sections), the *Tractatus* itself segues into *Investigations*, as part of the terrain we are departing. (Another way of putting this is Wittgenstein's remark in the preface: the new thoughts of *Investigations* "could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of my old way of thinking."[16]) To be brief, thematic continuity can be seen in the following ideas: philosophy is ideally a form of dispelling doubt and perplexity; in actuality it usually is obfuscation through mistaken use of language; the results of philosophy cannot be said, only shown or displayed; philosophy is not like the natural sciences (it has no subject matter, it makes no predictions); what is nonsensical must be revealed as such and can only be done obliquely; competing philosophical positions, such as realism, idealism and solipsism all say the same thing, *i.e*., they say nothing, they are nonsensical.

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remarks to *Wittgenstein: Mind and Will*, (xvi) where he mentions von Wright's agreement (*Op. cit.*) that *Investigations* ends at §693, the remaining material constituting work in another direction.

[14] §415; *cf*, p. 230, where he qualifies this remark.

[15] *E.g*., Garth Hallett's Companion to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, (Cornell UP, 1977); John Koethe, *The Continuity of Wittgenstein's Thought*, (Cornell UP, 1996); Norman Malcom, *Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's criticism of his early thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

[16] *Philosophical Investigations*, (3rd. ed. New York: MacMillan, 1958) G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, ed., G. E. M. Anscombe, trans., preface, vi.

It is worth noting the changes that take place in the midst of this continuity between early and later work. The notion of sense becomes contextualized. The characterization of philosophy as describing language gets localized; the desire to explain rather than describe is more ruthlessly expunged; the picture theory of meaning is no longer taken to be paradigmatic of all language. Depth, in terms of showing the features of an ideal language, or the essence of language, gets transfigured into depth grammar, *i.e.*, the prima facie relations of grammar are dispelled (these giving rise to what are called 'grammatical confusions') and we get a perspicuous view of what our local languages do in context. 'Deep' grammar now means seeing grammar as it functions, not as we think it ought to function. This is opposed to the earlier idea of displaying the general form of language. I follow Robin Haack and David Pears, among others, in seeing this shift in approach as a turn towards naturalism, and this moves Wittgenstein into familiar pragmatist territory, as I argue in chapter four. But such a turn can be seen as a coincidental confluence between James and Wittgenstein, and this is why I attend to the role James plays as Wittgenstein's sometimes foil.

Apart from the author of the *Tractatus*, the only people who are mentioned on a recurring basis in *Investigations* are Augustine, Lewis Carroll, Gottlob Frege, William James, F. P. Ramsey, Bertrand Russell, Socrates and God. There are good reasons for paring this list down considerably. Lewis Carroll is mentioned in connection with his gibberish poems, to qualify a point about meaning and use. One of the two occurrences of Ramsey's name occurs in the preface, as an expression of gratitude, the other is a remark that included a coinage useful to Wittgenstein. The instances of Augustine's name are, with one exception, all part of a single example, the picture of language quoted from his *Confessions*, from which the dialectic of the book begins. Significantly, all references to Ramsey, Frege, and Russell occur between sections 22 and 81. There is no mention of them after the description of the Augustinian picture, what most scholars consider the entranceway to Wittgenstein's thought. Regarding what follows after that picture has been presented, Baker and Hacker put it best:

> In Volume 1 we suggested that sec. 143-242 of the *Investigations* can be considered to be the core of the book, and we likened it to a mountain range that must be crossed before Wittgenstein's philosophy can be understood and the private language argument seen aright. Our commentary, which terminated at sec. 184, could be seen, we wrote, as taking the reader to the top of the mountain passes.[17]

They go on to say that the fact that they devoted an entire volume to sections 185-242, shows their opinion as to the difficulties of this downward slope, and though they do not directly claim it, I think the point of the simile is to suggest that most readers of *Investigations* give up at this point, precisely because of its difficulties.

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[17] *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity: Volume 2 of an Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p. viii.

Mention of Frege, Russell and Ramsey all occur prior to this watershed; references to James occur in the valleys beyond. He is mentioned in connection with a variety of different quandaries, and Wittgenstein's remarks evince little of his attitude towards James's philosophy. They are enigmatic both due to their location in the text and the use to which they are put. Yet they are there, while almost no other person is mentioned. Drawing conclusions from this is dicey; certainly there is little evidence from which to form opinions. Yet, if we look at the *Nachlaß*, things become clearer. And, if we use the hypothesis that James was in the background of Wittgenstein's thought—despite some obvious differences between them—we might make more sense of the Wittgensteinian project, most notably, we might understand why description of varied instances is so important, and why metaphysical theories are nonsensical.

There are other obstacles to making a convincing case for the 'Wittgenstein-James hypothesis': most Wittgenstein commentators lack familiarity with James's work. British and European commentators, coming out of logical or semantic backgrounds (for example, Michael Dummett, Anthony Kenny, Jaakko Hintikka) tend to see Wittgenstein in relation to Frege, Russell, Kant, or Hume (and roughly in that order).[18] The most thorough exegetes of *Investigations* are without a doubt G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, yet even their treatment of James is quick to assume he fails to see what Wittgenstein is warning philosophers about. Indeed, references to Locke and Hobbes—two philosophers for which we have no evidence of Wittgenstein's having read—appear with a frequency comparable to that of James. Few commentators even mention James in their work, which is bewildering merely when given his quantitative ranking in the *Nachlaß*. It is almost taken as an article of faith that any philosopher not arriving at Wittgenstein's precise destination is *eo ipso* a victim of linguistic bewitchment. (This presumes a great deal, especially that there *is* such a clear destination in Wittgenstein's later thought. Given the many changes in his late period, including the abandonment of *Investigations* in the final years of his life, one might regard that manuscript with a great deal of skepticism.)

These problems notwithstanding, I have found a great deal of useful material in the secondary literature, and have tried to cite influences where they have occurred. It might be helpful to recount the scholarly efforts preceding this dissertation, to provide some sense of why such a lengthy, detailed, and rather narrow analysis is attempted herein.

Chronology of Scholarship on the topic of Wittgenstein and James

The earliest reference to this sort of relation between James and Wittgenstein is found in John Passmore's *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, first published in 1957. There we find the following claim by the author:

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[18] There are of course other scholars eager to press other connections. Thus we find, *e.g.*, Rudolph Haller (*Questions on Wittgenstein*, Routledge, 1988) citing Spengler, Mauthner, Kant, neo-positivism and

> If I were asked to mention the two books, apart from the *Tractatus* (and the Frege-Russell tradition it incorporates), most suitable as background reading to the *Philosophical Investigations*, they would be Schlick's *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (especially his lectures on 'Form and Content') and William James's *Principles of Psychology*, supplemented by his *Pragmatism*. Wittgenstein several times refers to James—a rare distinction—but not, I think, quite so as to bring out the nature of his relationship to James. Wittgenstein also refers to the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, which admirably illustrate, he thinks, the way in which philosophical problems actually arise. (I had written of James's influence on purely internal evidence. One of his former pupils, Mr. A. C. Jackson, tells me that Wittgenstein very frequently referred to James in his lectures, even making on one occasion—to everybody's astonishment—a precise reference to a page-number! At one time, furthermore, James's *Principles* was the only philosophical work visible on his bookshelves.)[19]

Little can be concluded from this, except perhaps that for the perceptive scholar, who has looked at both figures, such a claim—that the *Principles of Psychology* and *Pragmatism* serve as useful background reading—is hardly extravagant. Still, pedagogical traditions can be slow to change, and thus we find that for decades to come, scholars could make this suggestion that *Principles* and *Investigations* be compared, only to meet with little interest. In the journal *New Scholasticism* there appeared two brief articles, in 1966 and 1972, renewing the call for comparative study of James and Wittgenstein.[20] But these seem to have sparked little serious interest.

As Wittgenstein scholarship progressed throughout the sixties and seventies, much of his unpublished material became available to the public. This material included a letter to Bertrand Russell, dated June 22, 1912, where Wittgenstein describes his reading of James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. He said reading it did him "a lot of good", and this spurred the thoughts of many writers who were attempting to understand Wittgenstein's milieu, and the influence of his idiosyncratic education on his philosophical thought.

Interestingly, John Wisdom had made this connection already. In a paper read to the Aristotelian Society (published in 1961), Wisdom explored Wittgenstein's animus against the notion of 'essence'—his so-called 'family resemblance' view of meanings.[21] Wisdom introduced this feature of Wittgenstein's technique by quoting from James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. There James shows a similar tendency to downplay generalizations and gross definitions, preferring instead to concentrate on the variations found in particular cases. Though Wisdom did not state it, this raises the interesting possibility that Wittgenstein *got* the idea of family resemblances from reading *Varieties*. Russell Goodman would explore this hypothesis a generation later.

Weininger as the definitive influences, while elsewhere Richard Rorty emphasizes the similarities between Wittgenstein and Dewey.

[19] *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin paperback (2nd) edition, 1968) p. 592 note 4.

[20] Fairbanks, Matthew. "Wittgenstein and James" *New Scholasticism* 40(3) (1966) 10pp.; Wertz, S. K. Discussion Article: "On Wittgenstein and James" in *ibid.*, 46(4) (1972) 3pp.

[21] Wisdom's essay appears in K. T. Fann, ed., *op. cit.*

Also appearing in this period was a memoir by Wolfe Mays (1967)[22], where this former student of Wittgenstein's mentions the use *of The Principles of Psychology* in his lectures for 1940-2. Most of the essay is recounting Mays' research into Wittgenstein's Manchester activities, however, this reference to James fills out our picture of Wittgenstein's use of his text in his teaching years. Between Mays, Jackson, *The Brown Book*, and a letter to Rhees[23] from November 1944, we can infer that the *Principles* was used in Wittgenstein's teaching from the middle thirties to his retirement from Cambridge in 1947.

As mentioned, in the nineteen-seventies, there was the appearance of *A Wittgenstein Workbook* (1970) (Coope, *et al.*), with its appendix comparing passages in *Principles* with similar ones in *Investigations* and *Zettel*. Still no one took up the task of examining these with an eye to the clarity of Wittgenstein's understanding of James, or the use to which those passages were put. Even in the eighties and nineties, when detailed commentaries on each passage in *Investigations* were completed, with copious reference to the Wittgensteinian *Nachlaß*, there was not much of value written on this topic.

Indeed, things seemed to be moving backwards. Wilhelm Baum gave a brief discussion paper (in German), entitled "Wittgenstein und William James" at the 4th International Wittgenstein Symposium in 1979, since published in their annual *Proceedings*. His three-page discussion dealt exclusively with Wittgenstein's letter to Russell mentioning *Varieties*, and the book's possible influence on the mysticism in the *Tractatus*. By now a small tradition seems to have been in place, whereby commentators would recount Passmore's anecdote about the presence of *Principles* on Wittgenstein's otherwise barren bookshelves at Cambridge, and his letter to Russell about how reading James did him 'a lot of good.'

Soon thereafter, Robin Haack published a useful article entitled, "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism"[24], where he compared Wittgenstein's later work with the views of the three 'classical' pragmatists, Peirce, James and Dewey. Here we get a useful distinction, between the purely descriptive naturalism seen in *Investigations*, and the more ambitious 'explanatory' naturalism Haack ascribed to the pragmatists. However, there are problems in lumping these three thinkers together, not least of which is the fact that of the three, James was far more tentative in his scientific naturalism that either Peirce or Dewey.[25] At the same time, knowledge that Wittgenstein used James in his work was spreading. Ian Hacking, in his review of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (2 volumes), wrote:

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[22] *Ibid.*

[23] See Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, p. 477-8.

[24] *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 19 (1982) pp. 163-172.

[25] The fact that this is not widely known may be due to Dewey's appropriation of James's legacy after the latter's death in 1910. See Richard Gale's insightful "John Dewey's Naturalization of William James" in Ruth Anna Putnam, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.)

> James is the only psychologist (besides some of the Gestalt people) to whom Wittgenstein regularly alludes. The vigor of James's writing is used to make plain the bizarre paths into which we are led by the very idea of a faculty of introspective knowledge. The danger here lies in postulating that there is an exclusively subjective means of gaining self-knowledge.[26]

This is pretty much where things have stood, at least until 1994. At that time Russell B. Goodman published the first *bona fide* essay on the topic, "What Wittgenstein Learned from William James"[27]. Goodman's article is the first, and to my mind only, robust discussion of Wittgenstein and James. Goodman spells out the nature of their relation, sounding the right hermeneutic notes of caution and qualification of the extent to which these two thinkers' ideas are 'the same.' Goodman notes the descriptive nature of Wittgenstein's work, which sets some of his comments apart from James's, however Goodman sees in James a tentative approach to explanation also stressed by Cooper. He does however characterize both philosophers as more engaged in an 'antimetaphysical' enterprise than I have emphasized in their works. Given that I am arguing for their confluence on the matter of a metaphysical position, this option is not available to me. I argue instead that they offer a new position as a replacement for traditional pictures, and that this offer is embodied as part of a therapeutic analysis of those older views. Thus this essay is at once more conservative and more radical than professor Goodman's undertaking. The conservatism consists in the restriction of this thesis to matters of convergence rather than strict influence from James to Wittgenstein. The radicalism of this enterprise is found in treating the pragmatism of Wittgenstein as an entranceway to his rather camouflaged *Weltanschauung*, and using James's ideas to make this view more perspicuous. This is the way James understood his own pragmatism, as a foyer from which, after one has walked its length, one may open the door and explore the home of radical empiricism.[28]

The early nineties saw an increase in the number of essays on the topic. There are two articles by Everett J. Tarbox Jr., published in the *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* (1992, 1994.) These articles are less helpful than Goodman's work, in part because they are directed at another project: the 'recovery' of James's pragmatism and radical empiricism in philosophy of religion. Like many earlier attempts, Tarbox's essays sketch in general terms what I hope to spell out in greater detail. Furthermore, Tarbox makes one empirical claim that I must dispute. In his 1992 article, Tarbox assumes Wittgenstein became aware of *Principles* in his first semester as a student at Cambridge. This was in the fall of 1911, which would make Wittgenstein's knowledge of this text contemporaneous with his exposure to *Varieties*. Tarbox's evidence is the suggested reading put forth by G. E. Moore for his Moral Sciences lectures of that year. James's book appears along with an article by James Ward (for whom Wittgenstein later worked in his psychological laboratory) and another text on psychology by George F. Stout. Brian McGuinness

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[26] "Wittgenstein the Psychologist" *New York Times Review of Books*, 1 Apr. 1982 (3pp.).
[27] *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 11(3), (July 1994), pp. 339-354.
[28] "As the young Italian pragmatist Papini has well said, [pragmatism] lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it." *Pragmatism*, 32.

records Moore discussing Ward's views, but not James's. Wittgenstein is reported to have disputed vigourously Moore's suggestion that Ward is wrong in characterizing psychology as differing from physics in its subject matter and approach.[29] This is indeed an interesting bit of evidence concerning Wittgenstein's early reactions to a topic he would later explore in depth. However, Tarbox overlooks the character of Wittgenstein's early university education: his attendance of Moore's lectures was sporadic and tempestuous. He is not known to have come to such lectures with any significant amount of study or preparation behind him: Wittgenstein preferred to 'think on his feet'. Furthermore, there as yet have been no evidence found of Wittgenstein reading or even mentioning the *Principles* prior to the nineteen thirties. I therefore think Tarbox has assumed too much.

Finally, we must note two further contributions in recent years to this topic. Hilary Putnam in 1995 published a short lecture series on pragmatism, where James formed the first, and Wittgenstein the second, topics of discussion.[30] Putnam's thoughts are somewhat general (unsurprising, given the genre), but he does stress the naturalism of both thinkers, their concern with describing the conditions of experience (and thus their twin indebtedness to Kant.) He has also identified his own 'internal realism' as another member of the radical empiricist family. Again, while these thoughts are interesting, they are not terribly relevant or illuminating for present purposes, though Putnam's interpretation of James is one of the sources of support I draw upon below. Jaime Nubiola, of the University of Navarra (Spain), published (also in 1995) a rebuttal to Joachim Schulte's suggestion that James was the source of some interesting examples for Wittgenstein, but had no substantive philosophical influence upon him.[31] Influence is a matter largely neglected herein, but I must mention how strange Schulte's claims struck me when I first read them. On the most superficial level, Wittgenstein's use of James does indeed seem opportunistic and disinterested, but the mere presence of such mention in an otherwise anonymous and ahistorical body of philosophical work raises the possibility of influence or admiration, and Schulte dismisses this unduly. There are many reasons one may speculatively impute to the scholarly community as to why this topic has been ignored for so long, and I hope the ones I have already mentioned will not appear too or tenuous or antipathetic. Wittgenstein and James were profoundly capable, but also profoundly *honest* philosophers, and I think that this fact above all makes their respective works difficult to penetrate, and thus the possibilities for misunderstanding their ideas is, I suspect, perennial.

Having said that, I must end this introduction with the customary hope that the inevitable errors lurking in this document will not prove too great an obstacle to understanding the two philosophies I have sought to compare and contrast.

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[29] See *Wittgenstein: A Life* (London: Duckworth, 1988) chapter four.
[30] Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995.)
[31] Nubiola, "W. James y L. Wittgenstein: ¿Por Qué Wittgenstein No Se Consideró Pragmatista?" *Anuario Filosófico*, 1995 (28), pp. 411-423. J. Schulte, *Experience and Expression* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), p. 9.

Chapter One –Does 'Consciousness' Exist?

The purpose of this chapter is to begin the task of describing James's philosophical psychology (what is sometimes, and not unproblematically, called a 'philosophy of mind') with an eye towards clarifying the relationship between this picture and Wittgenstein's views as found in *Philosophical Investigations*. James's position is complex, and parts of it are found throughout many books and essays composed throughout his career. The objective here is to start locally, with a single issue that clearly evinces James's overall position, before moving on to his broader view, which I call his 'Weltanschauung' (this follows James's own practice.) The issue at hand is "What is 'consciousness'?", or as James framed the question, "Does 'consciousness' exist?" His own answer was to deny that consciousness existed as a thing awaiting scientific study, but that it does describe a function of human beings which it is psychology's job to explore. In considering James's answer to this question, we shall have the opportunity to examine his psychological technique, as well as this employment of the pragmatic method, which is a central part of his philosophy. His concrete approach will lead him to eventually dismiss the mind/body problem as something of a pseudoproblem in philosophy of psychology, and thus this issue is a good example of James's 'therapeutic' answer to philosophical questions. Once James's theory of consciousness has been described, a broader, more abstract account of his radical empiricism may be given.

There are several problems germane to the overall thesis of this essay that will determine the form of this chapter. James's philosophical account of consciousness is found in two places: the 1904 essay "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" and in the middle chapters of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), from which Wittgenstein derived his quotations of James. For various reasons discussed below, it is unlikely one can get a good sense of James's true position without considering these texts in conjunction. One reason that can be discussed here is James's reluctance to make his true philosophical views known, particularly in the *Principles*. That book was designed as a survey of psychology, and as such the idiosyncratic views of the author were suppressed to a large degree. As W. E. Cooper has argued, one may see two levels at work in the *Principles*, a domain of metaphysical claims (bracketed or muted for the most part) and situated beneath that a domain fit for empirical science, which assumes many things James *qua* metaphysician would eschew.[1]

To see this hidden 'metaphysical level' of the *Principles*, it is helpful to explore the essays James wrote when he finally did feel comfortable promulgating his views, the radical empiricism essays of what some have taken to be his brief 'pure experience' period.[2] This not only clarifies James's views on how

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[1] "William James's Theory of Mind" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28(4), [1990] pp. 571-593.
[2] There is some debate among James scholars as to the degree of continuity that exists between James's early and later writings. See John Wild's *The Radical Empiricism of William James* (1968) for a view

consciousness is to be understood, but it lays forth his philosophical position and serves as an example of his technique. But James's mature view was built on his earlier ideas, and to further the goal of clarification, it will be necessary to move from James's essay to the *Principles* itself. Here we will find the building blocks of much of James's later philosophy, side-by-side with many of the remarks that would spur Wittgenstein's criticism and rumination. Finally, having reunited the *Principles* with the first of the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, I shall attempt to enhance our view of James by introducing some salient points made by Gerald Edelman, a contemporary researcher who works with James's model of consciousness, and brings needed empirical detail to this discussion. Edelman's ideas will help bring into view an overlooked side to James—his scientific side—and it is hoped that this introduction of the 'evolutionary' James will balance the overall investigation into his relation to Wittgenstein and radical empiricism.[3]

The fact that William James thought a lot about thinking is hardly remarkable. Thinking, awareness, cognition, and consciousness are all among the terms used by scientists, philosophers and laypersons to describe a range of phenomena human beings exhibit, and as such are natural objects of human inquiry. An experimental psychologist as well as a philosopher, James gravitated rather naturally throughout his career towards questions about the ultimate nature of mind, its causes and its natural context. If you look at what James said about consciousness in his psychological writings, as well as in the philosophical articles that came later in his career, you will discover something very interesting. James's main concern seems to be therapeutic: over and over he tries to disabuse his colleagues of troublesome concepts, of misleading imagery and metaphors, and he struggles to make his audience aware of the difficulties that arise for the psychologist from the admission of a few commonsensical notions, such as the notion that the mind is a thing. Eventually, James's criticisms would grow into the more positive project of articulating a new philosophical picture, one he thought would free us from error. That picture is the topic of the succeeding chapter. Here, I wish simply to display James's philosophical insights into consciousness, as a prelude to a larger philosophy and an example of technique. To make things as clear as possible, I will select texts from James's larger *oeuvre* that I believe are most pertinent and indicative of his overall view, and I will augment this exegesis with the introduction of a few ideas from our own time which further elucidate this particular account of the human mind.

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favourable to the present study. A contrasting view can be found in Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (1999).

[3] Many treatments of James that emphasize the kind of continuity throughout his career assumed here achieve unification of his thought at the expense of this very side of his work. Wild, *op. cit.*, Aron Gurwitch, and Bruce Wiltshire portray James as engaging in phenomenology, while other 'unified' accounts, such as Patrick Dooley and David Lamberth, address matters moral and religious rather than the metaphysical topics at issue herein. Most 'hard nosed' explications, such as A. J. Ayer's *The Origins of Pragmatism* and Owen Flanagan's comments in *Consciousness Reconsidered* attempt to amputate the radical empiricism in order to salvage what they see of value. W. E. Cooper's forthcoming *The Unity of William James's Thought* (Vanderbilt UP) will be a significant addition to the literature. There was,

Overview of James's 'Consciousness Writings'

James's attempts to supplant inquiry into the nature of consciousness with questions about its function reflect his commitment to evolution, and can be seen very early in his career. "The Function of Cognition", written in 1884, lays some important groundwork in re-describing knowledge as a 'functional relation' between knower and known. This is an early statement both of James's pragmatism and his denial of the existence of consciousness. "The Sentiment of Rationality" was a long essay about the nature of thinking (including many of James's thoughts on the psychology of philosophy), and dates from 1879. In this piece James calls the drive for parsimony the "philosophical passion *par excellence*" (WB 53) and contrasts it with the drive for seeing things in their detail and native complexity. In addition to characterizing rationality and philosophical inquiry in psychological terms, linking these activities to subjective satisfactions, James puts forward a psychological account of doubting that will resurface in the *Principles*.

Many of the essays that would later comprise *Principles*, as well as some others of a more explicitly philosophical nature, evince the approach to investigating consciousness that James openly advertises late in his career. The issues James treated in the 1870s and 1880s were centered around a few key issues: integrating evolutionary thinking into psychology (James for the most part arguing for viewing psychological phenomena in their evolutionary context, including an argument on evolutionary grounds against epiphenomenal theories of consciousness in "Are We Automata?" (1879)), his early criticisms of the passive 'spectator' theories of the mind put forward by empiricists, and clarifying the thinking behind experimental design. He was also concerned to reconcile physiological psychologists, the majority of whom had backgrounds in what we now call the life sciences, with philosophically oriented psychologists, who mixed their study of the human mind with epistemology, metaphysics and theology.[4] The twelve-year period of the composition of the *Principles* saw James review or criticize many works of philosophy and psychology (27 reviews and notices), and the decade that preceded this saw a further 39 reviews and short notices of philosophical and psychological texts. While James was a prolific writer, he tended to postpone his views, often for several years.[5] The *Principles* was long-delayed, and is filled with expressions of its author's dissatisfaction with his writing. Nevertheless, it is his largest, most comprehensive, and most

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however, a little-noticed issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin* in 1982 that was devoted to James's reading of Darwin.

[4] Evidence of this can be found in many of James's early reviews and notices, but perhaps the clearest statement of his reconciling project can be found in 'A Plea for Psychology as a "Natural Science"' (1892).

[5] While James is seen in the last five years of his life to engage in a barrage of responses to critics, and hence looks like a 'rapid-fire' debater, this is not typical. It took James nine years to publish "The Importance of Individuals" (1890), a response to a criticism of his views expressed in "Great Men, Great Thoughts and the Environment", which dates from 1880. Later in life, things changed. In assembling his pragmatism sequel, *The Meaning of Truth*, in 1909, James used essays dating as far back as 1885. James, trained as a physician, was well aware of the implications of his heart condition, and may have broken this old habit out of necessity. (He also made plans for three volumes which were published posthumously.)

technical work. James would again keep his own council before finally announcing his mature views on the nature of consciousness.

Despite the vast scope of *Principles*, and the subtlety of James's positions on philosophical and methodological issues therein, there has been a tendency to cast James in a simple light when his role in the history of psychology is described. Philosophers tend to see James as a naïve introspectionist, and Wittgenstein's comments on James in his lectures and writings can be seen in this light. James's article "Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology" (1884), which was the basis for his chapter "The Stream of Thought" in *Principles*, is the textual source for this view, though looking at its original title one might be incredulous. Psychologists, on the other hand, tend to see James as the 'grandfather of behaviourism' (J. B. Watson is usually credited with being the parent of the movement, though significantly, he abhorred James's psychology for its reliance on introspection!) The source of this view is the James-Lange theory of emotion. James's statement of the view occurred in 1884, in the essay "What is an Emotion?" (also worked into a chapter in *Principles*), and here one finds the James appropriated by psychology. This essay, and the fact that James secured stable funding for the first laboratory of experimental psychology in North America (and one of the first in the world), makes James a hero of scientific method and behavioural reductionism. Obviously, these two interpretations are oversimplifications of James's views (as one would expect if one telescoped a theory of mind out of a single essay!) Consideration of James's statements in the context of the larger treatise in which they would eventually appear is crucial to making sense of his views. Regarding Wittgenstein's reading of James, we have no direct evidence of how closely he read the entirety of the book: his remarks pertain almost exclusively to the chapters on the stream of thought, consciousness of self and emotion. The possibility must not be discounted that while James's comments proved stimulating to Wittgenstein, possibly even prompting him to adopt Jamesian views, the former nevertheless got James wrong in important respects.

His lectures aside (James taught a course on 'philosophical psychology' in the 1890s, which displays many of his characteristic concerns and approaches in the field), James made only one major statement on the nature of consciousness in the period 1890-1903. That essay was "The Knowing of Things Together" (1895), which marks the beginning of a period in James's thought where philosophy takes center stage, and psychology plays a supporting role. This essay was later excerpted by James as "The Tigers in India" in *The Meaning of Truth*. James's comments in this period suggest a growing dissatisfaction with the philosophical concessions made in *Principles* to professional philosophical opinion, and he begins to revise his views somewhat, moving in the direction of an 'out of the closet' radical empiricism.

The *Will to Believe* (1897) warrants mention here as well, as James argued in his preface to that collection of essays that they exemplified the radically empirical approach, though they did not constitute an argument for that view. Apart from the well-known defence of religious belief in the essay of the same title, the collection contains a shortened version of "The Sentiment of Rationality", an early essay that

shows James's evolutionary view of epistemology. Also of note in this collection of essays and lectures from his intermediate period are the essays "Great men and their environment" and "The Importance of Individuals", which combine important pragmatic, fallibilist points about human knowledge as pertaining to large scale phenomena studied by the social sciences and cosmology.

In 1904, James issued a series of articles in rapid succession that articulated his radical empiricism, and expanded the pragmatic method as announced in 1898's "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results." The majority of these essays were collected in the posthumously published *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912), although much of the material was re-worked and appears in revised form in *Pragmatism*, *The Meaning of Truth* and *A Pluralistic Universe*. These essays were the product of decades of procrastination and self-doubt on the part of their author, and James was probably right to hesitate: his essays were subjected to a barrage of criticism[6], and he turned his attention to explaining his version of the pragmatic method in 1906. This too garnered a great deal of criticism from his professional colleagues, but some popular success as well. James spend his remaining years attempting to write his technical version of his philosophical *Weltanschauung*, but he never progressed beyond another lecture series on the problems and confusions in contemporary academic philosophy (*A Pluralistic Universe*, which bore the significant subtitle, 'on the present situation in philosophy'), and a partial manuscript for an introductory textbook in philosophy (*Some Problems of Philosophy* (1911)). This gives the impression that at the end of his life, James had despaired of talking to his peers, and looked to the future for an audience for his philosophical views. This leaves the interpreters of James with a number of imperfect options: one can return to the *Principles*, a book whose author attempted to control his articulation of his own philosophical views; or, one can consider the essays in radical empiricism, a project more or less abandoned by James in 1906; as a final option, one can rely on his popular lectures, which tend once again to mute James's own views where they are most idiosyncratic, and which lack technical detail.

James's "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" (1904)

Most notable among the radical empiricism writings is the essay "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?", which appeared in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, in September of 1904. Of all his later essays, this is the one which most completely and succinctly made the points about consciousness and metaphysics that James had been concerned with for much of his career. He frequently referred readers back to it is subsequent writings, and assigned it premier place among his planned collection of

[6] A useful exploration of the contemporary response to James's radical empiricism essays has been undertaken by Eugene Taylor and Robert Wozniak. See their *Pure Experience: The Response to William James* (St. Augustine Press, 1986).

essays expounding radical empiricism. A close reading of the essay reveals a debt to the ideas and analogies expressed in the *Principles*, as I hope to demonstrate.[7]

Faced with the hermeneutic task of extricating James's philosophical position from a text wherein the author explicitly refrains from drawing on any metaphysical support of a controversial nature, we may look to this essay for help in uncovering what James was concealing in the *Principles*. Despite his claims to the contrary, it is apparent to many readers that the *Principles* approaches many subjects with an unusual philosophical animus, and this leaves us with a narrow range of interpretive options. We may ignore the implicit, or if you like, shadowy philosophical bias, but we do so at the peril of misreading the text rather severely. We may give a pathological explanation for that impulse, explaining James's position in terms of his personal idiosyncrasies: this is the method of psychobiographical exegesis. Richard Gale is a recent proponent of this view, arguing for a 'divided James' who could not have had a coherent position due to incompatible competing interests. Likewise Mark Schwehn sees in James's appropriation of Darwin a sort of willful distortion, whereby James creates his indeterministic picture of the world to satisfy his personal idiosyncrasies. (Schwehn nevertheless does see in *Principles* a descriptive rather than a positivistic scientific investigation, which is useful for the present thesis, see below, chapter four.)[8] While this might be desirable in cases where there is no claim to anything other than personal preference, James does in later life attempt to give rational justification for his positions on a host of philosophical issues arising from psychology. Explaining the coherence of the philosophy implicit in the *Principles* as idiosyncrasy ignores those reasons. Finally, we may reconstruct James's personal views from this later work, and this, it is hoped, will make the *Principles* sufficiently clear for us to proceed with consideration of Wittgenstein's commentary thereupon. It is not to be assumed at any time that Wittgenstein was familiar with "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?", nor that he would have interpreted the *Principles* in the manner that will follow.

To put this another way, we shall use "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" as a lens through which we may more clearly see the ideas expressed in the *Principles*. Previous commentators, such as Ellen Kappy Suckiel have explored this essay in an effort to understand James's *Weltanschauung*, but frequently they are quick to see a form of idealism therein, or they do not fully purge the dualist implications of their own view.[9]

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[7] Gerald Myers argues for a similar connection between the essay and *Principles* in his *William James: His Life and Thought* (Yale UP, 1986), chapter 11.

[8] Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); Mark R. Schwehn, "Making the World: William James and the Life of the Mind" *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. 30 (1982) pp. 426-454. Schwehn's position is particularly daunting, as he claims that, as far as *Principles* is concerned, James "could not sort psychic stress from intelletual perplexity or either of these from vocational indecision, and consequently he would never separate psychological study from philosophical speculation." (*ibid*., 454) If Gale's citations are to be any guide, it would appear that he was strongly influenced by Schwehn.

[9] See Kappy Suckiel's *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*, chapter 7, which is one of the better treatments of radical empiricism, particularly as it relates to pragmatism. Despite a thorough reading of James's essay, she insists on treating the contents of the stream of thought in a 'bipolar' manner (p. 127)

Commentators who have surveyed the totality of James's work often note the relevance of this essay, though few have attended to its argumentative structure. Hence we find John Wild saying of the *Essays* as a whole: "[a]s is usual with James, in expounding his theory, he develops it as he goes along, and often arrives at *aperçus* which are worked out for their own sake, apart from the general theory to which they are only vaguely relevant."[10] With such pessimistic ideas floating around in the secondary literature, I think it is important to analyse James's essay in detail, for therein we will find arguments based on a unique philosophical point of view, coherence with James's psychology, and a well-crafted array of examples put to exacting use. (It is noteworthy for our own purposes to recall how often Wittgenstein's prose is subjected to similar criticisms. One possible explanation in each case is, obviously, unsympathetic or incautious examination of their writings by scholars.)

Exegesis: Introduction and Section I: Consciousness is not a thing, but a function

The point of the essay is rather simple: consciousness does *not* exist, at least not in the way that a thing is said to exist. Thus, there is no object called consciousness for psychology to study. James begins this essay with the claim that he has been denying the existence of consciousness privately for a number of years[11], and for seven or eight of those years had, in his teaching, openly suggested the non-existence of consciousness and labored to describe its pragmatic equivalent. James's characterization of this essay as the breaking of a long silence is not insincere. His lecture notes from the previous decade show his concern for the subject treated herein, and the essay is frequently referred to by James in his subsequent writings. In point of fact, a close look at this essay will show that it borrows many ideas from work from the *Principles* period, and from the *Principles* itself. Aside from James's avowed distrust of consciousness as an entity for psychology to investigate, what is interesting about James's jumping off point is the fact that he attacks a misleading picture rather than an argument or evidence for consciousness' existence. Much of the essay will be an attack on old philosophical pictures and an attempt to improve upon them with pictures of his own.[12]

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and characterizes radical empiricism as failing to meet the demands of realism; the point is, of course, that James is rejecting some of those philosophical demands. In essence, Kappy Suckiel overlooks the therapeutic aspects of radical empiricism and a world of 'pure experience.' To her credit, she does acknowledge "that the usual dichotomy between realism and idealism is simply inapplicable to James's philosophy" (*ibid.*, 139). It is clear from the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, as from other writings, that James had sympathy for idealism on moral grounds, but he had no time for its rationalism. This is seldom noted in the secondary literature.

[10] *The Radical Empiricism of William James*, (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 365.

[11] James says it was twenty years in his 1904 article, placing his own beginning of this enterprise in 1884. This is the year he wrote "The Function of Cognition" *Mind* 10 (1885), pp. 27-44, which later was reprinted in *The Meaning of Truth*. In a speech in April of 1905 James admitted "since I began to concern myself seriously with psychology, this old dualism of matter and thought, this heterogeneity of the two stuffs posited as an absolute, had always presented difficulties for me." ("La Notion de Conscience", ERE 263)

[12] James's commitment to this method can be seen in his draft manuscript for his unfinished metaphysical treatise, which begins with a section entitled "Philosophies Paint Pictures". The complete manuscript is

James's attack does not extend to the denial of the phenomena of thinking, or our common-sense observations of it. He concedes that thoughts do exist, only that there is "no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made, out of which our thoughts of them are made." (4)[13] His criticisms therefore are against the dualism that grows out of the picture of consciousness being a component of a thought, an element awaiting the psychologist's extraction.[14]

The picture in question is from G. T. Ladd[15], and suggests that from any example of cognition, one may separate the subjective and objective components of a thought by careful analysis. The subjective and objective aspects are to be drawn off by the psychologist, as a pigment and the oil in paint[16]. The simile is Kantian, and suggests consciousness is a stable base or backdrop against which individual cognitions of objects take place. It is an impersonal (and some would argue, ineffectual) witness to the drama that unfolds before it. James claims that we admit the existence of consciousness without direct evidence, because following this view, consciousness is a condition for the possibility of knowledge.

This kind of criticism of James's can be found in some of his earliest published writings. His notice of Wundt's *Grundzüge der Physiologische Psychologie*, for example, published in 1875, takes the author to task for his misleading metaphors about the nature of thought, and many of the articles that later comprised the *Principles* were similarly aimed at contemporary authors who, he felt, were applying simplistic metaphors that belied available evidence.[17]

The stubbornness of investigators to search for something as slippery as consciousness should not be underestimated. James calls the notion, "a mere echo, the faint rumour left behind by the disappearing 'soul' upon the air of philosophy" (4), and yet his scientifically-minded colleagues continue to look for this

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entitled "The Many and The One" and can be found in *Manuscript Essays and Notes*, pp. 1-64. *Cf. Some Problems of Philosophy*, chapters 7-8.

[13] Parenthetical numbers in this section refer to the pagination of DCE in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

[14] This dualism had been plaguing James for many decades: his primary concerns seemed to be the problem of qualia (*e.g.*, "The Spatial Quale" (1879)), epiphenomenalism, representational theories of knowledge and the ethical implications of materialism. Other natural concerns for James would have been the inability to subject mental substances to controlled experimentation, and accounting for its ontogenesis in a Darwinian context.

[15] Ladd, G. T., *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, 1894, p. 30. Ladd's words are cited in a footnote, and flesh out the simile (and the philosophical method it implies), nicely: "Figuratively speaking" he writes "consciousness may be said to be the one universal solvent, or menstruum, in which to concrete kinds of psychic acts and facts are contained, whether in concealed or in obvious form."

[16] That James should be fascinated with this simile comes as no surprise to those who remember his training as a visual artist. The fact that he goes on to re-work the image in his favour later in the essay is also worth noting.

[17] Herbert Spencer was a favourite target of James. For a panoramic view, see James's, "Remarks on Spencer's *Definition of Mind as Correspondence*" (1878), the chapter "Necessary Truths and the Effects of Experience" in *Principles*, and the 1904 essay "Herbert Spencer" reprinted in *Memories and Studies*.

thing, because they suppose it necessary to explain thought. G. E. Moore provides an interesting example of this temptation to 'grasp' what consciousness is in itself. In a passage quoted by James, Moore seems to display the attitude that consciousness is superfluous to a psychological investigation, that introspection reveals no trace of the thing. Moore writes:

> "The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see *what*, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish. It seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue; the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it *can* be distinguished, if we look attentively enough, and know that there is something to look for." (Cited by James at 5-6; original in *Mind* 12 (1903), p. 450; also reprinted in Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 25)

The last sentence is bizarre in the face of what preceded it. Why must we cling to this belief? asks James. Where did this 'knowledge that there is something to look for' come from?

The guiding assumption through much of philosophy is that thinking has an objective and a subjective component, and that the task at hand is to separate the two[18]. Following this line of thought, James suggests this would imply experience had an "essentially dualistic constitution, from which if you abstract the content, the consciousness will remain revealed to its own eye." (6) The image suggests an approach analogous to chemical analysis, with the right processing yielding a pure product. (Perhaps this is why introspection is often conceived as an activity that takes calm conditions, concentration and a measure of patience[19].) Talking of the simile, James says "We operate here by physical subtraction; and the usual view is, that by mental subtraction we can separate the two factors of experience in an analogous way—not isolating them entirely, but distinguishing them enough to know that they are two." (*ibid.*)

Section ii: Consciousness is an addition, not a primitive element of experience

James's reasons for suspecting this approach are rooted in his work in the *Principles*, especially in the chapter "The Stream of Thought," which will be considered shortly. However, the aim in "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" is to push for a different guiding assumption than the analytic method described: "the separation of [experience] into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition." (6-7) Retooling Ladd's simile with paint for his own view, James illustrates: "In a pot in a paint-shop, along with other paints, it serves in its entirety as so much saleable matter. Spread on a canvas, with other paints around it, it represents, on the contrary, a feature in a picture and performs a spiritual function. Just so, I maintain, does a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of 'consciousness'; while in a different context the

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[18] The fault lies not only with philosophy, according to James, but with our languages, which often connote such dualism. James's analysis of the grammatical tendency towards 'double-barrelled' terms can be found in DCE, 7, and in *Principles* 193-4, *Cf.* "The Knowing of Things Together" (1895).
[19] *Cf.* Wittgenstein's remarks at *Investigations*, §327.

same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective 'content.'" (7) His summary of this idea is characteristically pithy: "in one group [the experience] figures as a thought, in another group as a thing." The notion of context soon comes to bear heavy explanatory weight, as for James, the ontological status of things perceived depends on the context that comes to surround it (my choice of language is deliberately vague: James makes much of the *post hoc* nature of said interpretation[20], but I will try to show that the context of discovery and the previous moments in the stream of thought play a role as well. This is another similarity between Wittgenstein and James, for as we shall see James cashing out the role of the past in terms of habits, Wittgenstein will fall back on a similar notion: linguistic training.)

Rather than continue in the tradition of seeing consciousness as a composite entity, a joining of subjective and object, James argues for the opposite approach. He takes an experience to be a unified whole, in itself neither mental nor physical, and these opposing aspects are brought out of a thought by the function to which that experience is subsequently put. (If talk of 'giving an experience a function' sounds strange, it should be noted that James was fond of shifting meanings, and did so whenever he thought philosophers had made a property or concept unduly abstract or unnatural. Like Wittgenstein, James criticized philosophers for living on a 'one-sided diet of examples.'[21] He meant 'function' both in the mathematical sense (hence, experiences served as arguments taking the place of variables) and in the sense of something which modified behaviour—what one might call a biological or 'environmental' sense.[22]) The context in which that experience[23] becomes situated over time, and hence, the function to which that bit of experience is subsequently put is what gives an experience a thingly or thoughtful character. As James puts it, "Experience, I believe, has no such inner duplicity; and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition—the addition, to a given concrete piece of it, of

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[20] *E.g.*, MEN, "[Note on Empiricism]" (1876-1877), #4502, p. 160: "The truth of a thing or idea is its meaning, or its destiny, that which grows out of it. This would be a doctrine reversing the opinion of the empiricists that the meaning of an idea is that which it has grown from." James in this early note goes on to make some interesting comments about identity and time, both of which show his mature philosophy in germ.

[21] See *Investigations*, §593.

[22] David Lamberth and William Gavin have stressed James's dynamic or revisionist use of language, which demystifies the frequent equivocations we encounter in his use of 'experience' and 'meaning.' To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time an equivocation regarding 'function' has been discussed. See Lamberth's *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), William Gavin, *William James and the Reinstatement of the Vague* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), as well as Haddock Seigfried's discussions of meaning and language in *William James's Radical Reconstruction of Philosophy*.

[23] Though I am attempted to substitute 'thought' for 'experience' from time to time, this clearly violates James intentions. I will try to talk of thoughts when discussing the *Principles*, and of experience when I treat later material. This will preserve James's actual usage. One might argue that 'event' would be a more neutral synonym; another possibility is to talk of 'fields', which James toyed with in 1895-6 (*Essays in Psychology*, Psychological Seminar notes) although these terms lack the teleological or progressive connotations of 'experience'. These also form an important part of James's meaning.

other sets of experiences, in connection with which severally its use or function may be of two different kinds." (*ibid.*)

The psychological neutrality towards the 'real' nature of a thought that James studiously maintained throughout the *Principles*[24] is also at work here in his continued talk of 'experiences' rather than 'mental objects' or 'mental events'. Clearly he is proceeding from a subjective point of view, or at least he is trying to describe such a view without third-person prejudice. (One example of such prejudice would be a clinician's assessment that a patient's reported thoughts of unicorns are 'mere ideas of unicorns' because, from the point of view of common sense, unicorns are not real, and hence the report cannot be veridical, except insofar as it is a veridical report of a hallucination.) The experimental psychologist's neutrality will, in this essay, blossom into a philosophical kind of neutrality—what Russell later called 'neutral monism'[25], or what James called 'pure experience.'

James suggested that the shift in philosophical pictures required a re-tooling of our technical language. While he credits Locke and Berkeley for initiating the shift he is applauding, it is really due to a confusion on their part. Locke, in making 'idea' refer to both sensory experience and concepts, blurred the line between mental things and physical things (for, phenomenal objects were bundles of ideas.) Likewise Berkeley (again, on James's impressionistic reading of these empiricists in DCE) identified ideas with common sense physical objects. Both Locke and Berkeley's systems of thought posit mental data that have an equivocal nature: they can be taken as bit of information about the world, or as chunks of non-physical 'inner' life[26]. James agreed about the equivocal nature but denied these data must occupy a mental domain or have an ontologically univocal character behind appearances. This confusion, it is not unfair to say, obsessed James. His notebooks are filled with attempts to chasten philosophers in an effective way[27], and one of his most important chapters in *Principles*, from the point of view of understanding his claims about introspection and mental life, is "The Methods and Snares of Psychology."[28] As far as the history of philosophy goes, James saw a kind of progress in his century, where talk of things and thoughts had been

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[24] In *Principles*, chapter vii, James cites at the psychologist's most common error "the *great* snare of the psychologist is the *confusion of his own standpoint with that of the mental fact* about which he is making his report." (195, emphasis James's) The creation of a representational theory of knowledge and the debate between nominalists and conceptualists are among the confusions cited by James as arising from this error.

[25] Russell did not coin the term; James Ward, Russell's teacher in the 1890s used the term in *Naturalism and Agnosticism* (London, 1899), his 1896-98 Gifford Lectures. I owe knowledge of this to Philip Dwyer.

[26] This equivocity can lead to a number of philosophical quandaries: the objectivity of secondary properties, the etiology and ontology of abstract ideas, and the nature of reference, for example. Chapter two will deal with James's system as a proposal to circumvent, or 'solve,' these issues.

[27] See *Manuscript Essays and Notes*, "Confusion of Conditions with Contents of Thought" for the best example. *Cf.* "The Miller-Bode Objections", "The Object of Cognition & The Judgment of Reality" and James's many notes on idealism and Kant, all in *ibid.*

[28] There James laments "[i]n English we have not even the generic distinction between the-thing-thought-of and the-thought-thinking-it, which in German is expressed by the opposition between *Gedachtes* and

replaced (in professional circles) by "such double-barrelled terms as 'experience,' 'phenomenon,' 'datum,' '*Vorfindung*'" (7) These terms preserved the ambiguity, but move in the right direction for James. They connote relations to two ontological realms, but they refer to a single event or given.[29]

He claims that his account will naturalize the dualism of physical and mental; it will be "reinterpreted, so that, instead of being mysterious and elusive, it becomes verifiable and concrete." (*ibid.*) His motive for this claim about verifiability stems from his view of the role of the context of an experience giving rise to its character. The ontological status of an experience becomes, not something in it, waiting to be extracted by analysis, but something that emerges due to specific environmental conditions: "it is an affair of relations, it falls outside, not inside, the single experience considered, and can always be particularized and defined." Ontology is more like an experience's clothing than its chemical composition. This view of ontology will bear significant explanatory weight when James turns to consider issues of perception and epistemology. In addition, this aspect of James's thought will be connected with Wittgenstein's notion that "essence is expressed by grammar." (*Investigations*, §371)

James then presents a thought experiment: take a 'presentation' of a room, say, the surroundings of your experience of reading a book, without inferring that an observer (you) is the ground for the perception; do not think of grounds or causes, just look at what's given. This perceptual experience has a center and a periphery: the book and the printed words form the nucleus, the furniture forms part of the fringe of awareness. According to James, if you take this scene to be what common sense suggests it is, a paradox ensues. For, if we take the room to be a collection of physical objects in a set of relations to one another, these objects are simultaneously 'in the mind'. James ignores the even dicier problem of the nature of the observer himself, and claims that, "the whole philosophy of perception from Democritus's time downwards has been just one long wrangle over the paradox that what is evidently one reality should be in two places at once, both in outer space and in a person's mind." (8)

On his reading of philosophy as a whole, the tendency has been to postulate mental images or pictures, things which represent the outside world to the conscious subject. This act skirts around the paradox by introducing a copy of the outer world, and it is the copy that gets non-physical qualities predicated of it. But according to James, this violates "the reader's sense of life, which knows no intervening mental image but seems to see the room and the book immediately just as they physically exist." (*ibid.*) Representational theories of knowledge of the external world seem to fail James's introspective test. Our knowledge is not

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Gedanke, in Latin by that between *cogitatum* and *cogitatio*." (*Principles*, 194n10) This chapter will be considered in more detail below.

[29] Half a century later Wilfred Sellars would return what James hath joined together to an earlier state. His treatment of 'experience', which removes the ambiguity James here tries to preserve, can be found in Sellars' influential 1956 essay "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", section five. The essay can be found in Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, (London: Routledge, 1963.)

mediated in this way. (James, like many philosophers, braces his theory against skepticism by distinguishing between mediate and immediate awareness. For Descartes, it was the 'noticing' of thinking-going-on, for James it is the 'given' of immediate experience. Wittgenstein's attitude towards this tactic will be discussed in chapter four.)

James attempts to avoid paradox by comparing the experience of perceiving with a point intersecting two lines. By means of this geometrical analogy, (which dates from the earlier essay "The Knowing of Things Together" (1895)) James attempts to portray dualism as a philosophical picture that overlooks an obvious relation (coexistence, or concomitance) between thought and thing (a version of 'failing to see the forest for the trees'), and the concomitant problem of the ontological paradox of an event being both physical and mental at the same time is dismissed as a pseudoproblem, replaceable by a pragmatic analysis of the context of the experience. The pragmatic method leads James to replace the question of what something 'essentially is' with questions about what relations are discernable or interesting in the context at hand. Such a context is normally (we might say habitually) divided into 'mental' and 'physical' or 'inner' and 'outer'. This point is treated with characteristic speed:

> "The puzzle of how the one identical room can be in two places is at bottom just the puzzle of how one identical point can be on two lines. It can, if it be situated at their intersection; and similarly, if the 'pure experience' of the room were a place of intersection of two processes, which connected it with different groups of associates respectively, it could be counted twice over, as belonging to either group, and spoken of loosely as existing in two places, although it would remain all the time a numerically single thing." (8)

James gives this an air of explanatory adequacy, but at first glance it seems ridiculous to suggest this solves anything. Are we really to think of the mental as 'another dimension' added to physical reality? (And have we hitherto been blind to this aspect of things?) James's analogy seems to be not about space *per se*, but about direction. The point he describes can be thought of as an intersection of two histories, the ontology of both we should leave undetermined for the time being. James wants to explain knowledge as a 'coming into contact' of two streams or trails, each with a history that is coherent, but which jointly may have only this intersection. (Given his pragmatic theory of knowledge, where knowing is a form of interaction with one's surroundings, this is more plausible than it first appears.) The ontological character ascribed to elements of that solitary experience depend on which line we trace, or attend to. As some lines are traced, relations become actualized, while alternatives 'die off' and fade from view. If we're looking for another book in that room, our practical interests take us into a physical world: a world of objects that look like the book, which obscure our view, or hinder our navigation ('I can't look in the far corner until I walk around that table'). If I'm looking for a book that I put somewhere, I might instead follow a 'mental' path: my attention centres around memories as I try and retrace my steps in order to learn where the book is now. Thinking about metaphysics and using the book as an example, a perceived object, provides yet a different case: I attend to changes in my perceptual fields normally taken for granted, in order to fulfil another

function. (It is to James's detriment that he only considers two examples, for his philosophy is not intended to be exclusively 'double barrelled'. Some parts of his presentation point admit of a more diverse reading, but the overall impression is of a strict dichotomy.[30] However, both his coordinate analogy and the target of his attack—psychophysical dualism—seem to limit us to matching pairs of examples.) I will argue in chapter four that Wittgenstein is more fully emancipated from the snares of dualistic thinking.

This is his introductory example to the world of pure experience, and it is designed to showcase how the theory transcends old philosophical tangles, by a method that borrows from common sense and is at the same time highly revisionary of it. The tactic is Berkelian, but James has more radical ends in view.

Section iii: extending pure experience analysis from the perceptual to the conceptual realm

James considers another example for treatment with his 'one point, two lines' model. He moves the discussion from perceptual experience to the conceptual, which is odd considering how concepts are not physical entities and hence do not seem to straddle the 'inner/outer' distinction in the way an experience of a perceptual object does[31]. But they do straddle that line in a way. Concepts have a dual life, as things thought by an individual, and as vehicles of a meaning which that individual can know or intend, but which exist apart from any one experience of that concept. Concepts endure; a situation of using that concept (of thinking it) is a event situated in time and survives only in memory. The nature of concepts fascinated James—few casual readers of James are aware of the extent to which he wrote about the ontological status of mathematical entities, for example. James published little of this material, his lengthiest discussion occurring in *Some Problems of Philosophy*, his last book. In DCE James's transition to this case highlights some enduring features of his views of concepts. He describes the transition from his perceptual example as a move "from the case of things presented to that of things remote" (9) which hints at his pragmatic view of concepts. Concepts exist to expand our world beyond the boundaries of present perception; through memory, habit and abstraction we organize experiences to suit our needs. James's theory of concepts will be discussed in detail in chapter two; to return to the text, his example is meant to show that the

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[30] "[T]he experience is a member of diverse processes that can be followed away from it along entirely different lines. The one self-identical thing has so many relations to the rest of experience that you can take it in disparate systems of association, and treat it as belonging with opposite context." (8) This mention of 'diverse processes' gets simplified in the same paragraph, and James goes returns to dualistic talk. For a fuller exposition of the processes he has in mind, see *Principles*, chapter XXI, "The Perception of Reality"

[31] James thought the shift from a perceptual example to an abstract one odd from a reader's perspective, as he says in his introduction to section three of the essay. For his own view on the relation of concepts and sensation, the following note might prove suggestive: "Thought with something given in it, that is the primordial irreducible datum....The dim duality is given from the start, the faintest sensation has it, and need not wait for the mind to come and apply any 'category' to it. In other words I can see no radical distinction between sensation and thought like what the Kantian school sets up. All is sensation or all is thought, as you please to call it." This note is quoted by Myers, in his chapter on "Thought" (Myers, 1986, p. 242) The original can be found in MEN, at 174-5. James thought this passage important enough to merit insertion in another manuscript essay (see editorial note, *ibid.*).

objective/subjective distinction, between the concept's reference and it's 'being thought right now by me', admits of the same treatment as his previous example of the reading room.

Speaking of what we might call the world of 'non-sensory awareness', James writes:

> This world, just like the world of percepts, comes to us at first as a chaos of experiences, but lines of order soon get traced. We find that any bit of it which we may cut out as an example is connected with distinct groups of associates, just as our perceptual experiences are, that these associates link themselves with it by different relations, and that one forms the inner history of a person, while the other acts as an impersonal 'objective' world, either spatial and temporal, or else merely logical or mathematical, or otherwise 'ideal.' (9-10)

Spatial and temporal concepts, for James, can include memories or fantasies, while by 'ideal' James means abstractions. The range of concepts mentioned is designed to showcase the variety of types of concepts as well as to display a kind of continuum, leading from the ideal (what is remote) to sensation (what is present). The concepts 'beer' and 'that last beer in the back of the fridge' differ in terms of their remoteness or proximity to my sensations. These are some of the relations concepts have with their relata. They also have relations to other concepts and other sensations. James adds, in a footnote, a reminder that the relations he is talking about are experienced relations, "members of the same originally chaotic manifold of non-perceptual experience of which the related terms themselves are parts." (10n6) Given this qualification, we can see that the origin of the subsequent context in which the concept is put is part of the given manifold. Also worthy of note is the discrimination involved in picking one part of that manifold out and paying attention to it. The subjective relations James mentions will be discussed momentarily, as for the second group of relations, to see what James means we should look to his comments in *Some Problems of Philosophy*, where he enumerates some of the conceptual worlds possessed by thinkers: "The world of common-sense 'things'; the world of material tasks to be done; the mathematical world of pure forms; the world of ethical propositions; the worlds of logic, of music, etc.," (SPP 33-34) (*Cf. Principles*, pp. 921-922, where James gives a rough survey of conceptual realms commonly possessed.)
[See Appendix 1]

This tendency for concepts to get grouped together (via their 'objective' relations) is simply James's loose version of a theory of internal relations. (The looseness is found in his lack of consideration of external relations, which may also be objective.) The objective aspects of concepts, therefore, are the possibilities of combination that are discovered when concepts are compared and contrasted. As for the subjective aspects of concepts, these are not often treated by philosophers, but for James they were not only of great interest, they bore a fair amount of explanatory weight. But this cannot be clearly explained without yet another digression on James's part.

The completion of the pure experience analysis of concepts requires James to explore both the objective and subjective aspects of a concept-experience. Before this is attempted, James moves to dispel a mistaken belief arising from a confusion about concepts. "The first obstacle" he writes "on the part of the reader to seeing that these non-perceptual experiences have objectivity as well as subjectivity will probably be due to the intrusion into his mind of *percepts*, that third group of associates with which the non-perceptual experiences have relations, and which, as a whole, they 'represent,' standing to them as thoughts to things." (10) The first two relata being a concept's location in the stream of thought and its relations to other concepts, this third group of relations does confuse the issue.

The subjective aspects of a concept like 'the book in the next room' are what lead me to the book. They include memories of my leaving that room, my bodily sense of changing position, my memories of what that room looked like, and where on my shelf that book might be found. In terms of my practical life, my concepts are seamlessly linked to my sensory experience, they give me a passing theory[32] of what to expect when I turn the corner, or open a door.

James cites his colleague Hugo Münsterberg approvingly, in a long passage that treats this example of a book in another room, and the similarities of that thought with the perceptual experience of a book that is at hand. Münsterberg makes some noteworthy claims, the first being that thoughts of absent objects "stand before me exactly as perceived objects would do, no matter how different the two ways of apprehending them may be in their genesis." (cited at 11) This statement shows Münsterberg to be employing a strategy similar to James's: he distinguishes between how a thought appears to its thinker and how it appears to the psychological observer. The latter is well aware of the difference between the perception of an object and the conception of the same object when it is out of one's perceptual sphere. The two experiences (it is believed) involve very different, though not unrelated, brain processes. Certainly there is no stimulation of the retina by the absent book. Nonetheless, perceptual memories and other sensory processing systems are no doubt involved in the thought of the absent book. This act of conceiving the book simply does not present itself in the stream of experience as radically different from a visual or tactile experience. We do not distinguish between perceptual awareness of the book and our awareness of its being around the corner without subsequent reflection, though such reflection is neither difficult nor unusual. Münsterberg then makes an interesting argument that helps James's overall cause—the elimination of psychophysical and subject/object dualisms. "If you agree that the perceptual object is not an idea within me, but that percept and thing, as indistinguishably one, are really experienced *there, outside*, you ought not to believe that the merely thought-of object is hid away inside of the thinking subject. The object of which I think, and of

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[32] I use this Davidsonian coinage deliberately: like a linguistic practice that enables me to see malapropisms for the unintended utterances they are (without knowing exactly what a person is going to say), a passing theory of experience would allow me to navigate my world, knowing surprises for what *they* are. Thus, if I turn a corner and *don't* find my study where it ought to be, I get the sense that something's very wrong indeed.

whose existence I take cognizance without letting it now work upon my senses, occupies its definite place in the outer world as much as does the object which I directly see."

Münsterberg goes on to treat memories in the same fashion, calling attention to their objective and immediate[33] character, and noting that their 'outerness' does not imply that they are observable to others thereby. This is a remarkable denial of the 'inner', as that concept crops up in psychology, and James's approval, as I have indicated, is clearly stated. "This certainly is the immediate, primary, naïf or practical way of taking our thought-of world." He claims that this world enjoys a kind of completeness in and of itself, although in the course of life such thoughts naturally flow into, and are checked by, perceptual experience. However, moments exist where this is not the case. James says dreaming is such a state. He does not go on to elaborate; he does not mention in this article how dreaming is a conscious state, though usually more passive than waking experience. He does not talk about the exercising of perceptual memory in dream states, nor the role dreaming plays in the overall physiological and psychological health of the dreamer. For the purposes at hand this is tangential. James's point here is simply that dreams are moments in our lives when our thought-of worlds do not terminate in the more vivid world of sensation.

Though Münsterberg uses the phrase 'real world' with a 'my' that conveys his cognizance of the subjective nature of his description, and his overall caution in separating first-person reportage and third-person observation, his language in the passage quoted above does raise a question. Why talk of the 'outer' character of mental experience? Shouldn't such talk disappear with the contrasting 'inner'? Did James sanction this way of putting things? James's remarks provide no help with this matter. Given the point about conception flowing into sensible experience (and about how we think 'through' our concepts to the sensible world to which they point), talk of an out-there-ness may be acceptable, even desirable, from the point of view of one friendly to pure experience. But to Münsterberg's talk of concepts being outside, he immediately adds the qualification about public observability. Concepts are outside but not publicly so. Part of the reason for this manner of expression could be related to the point James makes in his conclusion of the essay, but of course, we are talking about the expression of another philosopher here.

Still treating things in the conceptual realm, James gives an account of how a conceptual experience gets taken twice over as part of a subjective, personal history, and as part of a more objective scene. "The room thought-of" he writes "has many thought-of couplings with many thought-of things." He points out that some relations to the concept room, such as a single visit in that room, are "inconstant", while other connections are stable, *e.g.*, the relation that room has to the history of the whole house. The transitory

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[33] Speaking of perceptions, memories and thoughts of absent physical objects, Münsterberg claims they all "make up my real world, they make it directly, they do not have first to be introduced to me and mediated by ideas which now and here arise within me." (Quoted in James at 11)

history is our subjective personal history, while the more permanent relations are tied to the house[34]. As James extrapolates from this example, the conceptual dimension remains. The fluidity or stability of relations plays a strong role in determining the ontology assigned to an experience. This is especially true when we subject these relations to our will: if we attend to the more fluid relations, we meet with success, and the experience becomes subjective thereby; if we focus on those aspects which are resistant to our imagination and will, we determine (in both senses this term connotes) the experience to be 'about' something objective. 'About' here appears in scare quotes because of James's next point, where he reminds us that there is no dualism inherent in an experience, and from this follows his claim that an experience *per se* is neither representation or represented. These terms refer to groups of aspects of an experience that are singled out by attention, and link the experience in time with its epigones. James's way of exploring this is noteworthy for his attention to the actual facts of our world. Consider his development of this point:

> "Grouped with the rest of the house, with the name of its town, of its owner, builder, value, decorative plan, the room maintains a definite foothold, to which, if we try to loosen it, it tends to return, and to reassert itself with force. With these associates, in a word, it coheres, while to other houses, other towns, other owners, etc., it shows no tendency to cohere at all." (12)

This passage is remarkable not only for its wealth of diverse relations (which nicely illustrate James's frequent reminders of the richness of experience), but for his treatment of the 'ownership' of properties by an object, even a thought-of object. He treats the question of 'who does the room belong to?' in exactly the same way as he dealt with the question 'why do your thoughts belong to you, and mine to me, even after we have been sleeping?' in "The Stream of Thought" (see below). James gives a psychological, or if you like, genetic, account of how these relations are separated:

> "The two collections, first of its cohesive, and, second, its loose associates, inevitably come to be contrasted. We call the first collection the system of external realities, in the midst of which the room, as 'real,' exists; the other we call the stream in our internal thinking, in which, as a 'mental image,' it for a moment floats. The room thus again gets counted twice over." (*ibid.*)

He ends this discussion with a point that is very important for understanding the metaphysics of pure experience. The relations that determine an experience's character as subjective or objective, or as mental versus physical, are those relations that obtain between the original experience and those that follow it. Such characters as I have enumerated are "realized", says James (the equivocal term connoting two relations of interest here, namely, knowledge and making actual or real) "only when the experience is

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[34] James mentions in a footnote that even stabler relations would connect the room with what he calls 'ideal' relations, among which we might count the room's type (office), shape (oval), or style (imposing). But since James is trying to show similarity, these non-temporal concepts do not fit into his tale of twin histories of the room. See 12n10.

'taken,'...by a new retrospective experience, of which that whole past complication now forms the fresh content." (13) The genetic story[35] James tells of experiences developing objective or subjective characteristics depends on the notion of experiences connecting temporally. Future experiences will 'take up' their predecessors as part of their content. (I take the phrase 'that whole past complication' to suggest that the earlier experience does not itself form the total content of the latter.) These 'retrospective' experiences will themselves be taken up and modified by subsequent experiences. The process, as described by James, has an indefinite future, and a murky past, if one turns—as one naturally might—to consider the beginning of this procession of experiences. Does that 'original' experience have no connections with *its* predecessors? Is a 'pure' experience some special kind of detached event, devoid of relations to other experiences, or a past? Is it an experience *ex nihilo*? The possibility of a discrete experience seems unlikely, as James stressed the continuity of consciousness, and the fluidity of phenomenal time. And certainly an *ex nihilo* experience would be hard to naturalize. The sort perceptual or conceptual experiences James used as examples are not felt as isolated from a personal history, or our stock of concepts. Thinking of a book in another room doesn't just 'pop' into existence.

What, then, is a pure experience? Here James has two 'live' options, and in my opinion, he chooses poorly. He states that "the instant field of the present is at all times what I call the 'pure' experience." (13) This is at best a 'local' purity: it is pure if we do not take into consideration its predecessors, or its causes. It is pure if we abstractly regard it, which is in effect removing it from its natural surroundings. The alternative was taken by James in the later essays on radical empiricism, such as "The Thing and Its Relations", where he notes that "only new-born babes, or men in semi-coma from sleep, drugs, illnesses, or blows, may be assumed to have an experience pure in the literal sense of a *that* which is not yet any definite *what*, tho' ready to be all sorts of whats." (ERE 46)[36] This makes pure experience sound very rare indeed. Pure experiences are only had in moments where the normal cognitive apparatus of our mind is suspended, or not yet there. This view makes pure experience a kind of 'Ur-experience', the class of primordial events from which streams or trains of thought emerge. As David Lamberth points out, such a characterization admits great variety: 'for James, one discrete bit of pure experience might be extremely complex, including numerous relations, sensible determinations, and conceptual categories, while another experience might be sparse, involving only one sensible or conceptual component, or one relation such as transition or "jar".'[37]

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[35] This is the source of Owen Flanagan's departure from Jamsian metaphysics. While he applauds James's functional analysis of consciousness, Flanagan dismisses radical empiricism out of hand, as guilty of the genetic fallacy. (Amazingly, James rebutted such a criticism in *Principles*, p. 1227!) Flanagan's may be taken as a typical response to James's metaphysical views in the present day. See "Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views it" in Ruth Anna Putnam, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge, UP, 1997.) Richard Rorty's contributions here and elsewhere sound a similar separatist note within the James scholarship.

[36] Here James seems to equivocate, for a page earlier he talks of the 'fluent' nature of immediate experience, suggesting that such pure experiences are those where we do not engage in reflective thinking.

[37] David C. Lamberth, *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), p. 34. Lamberth also makes the important distinction between the formal monism of radical

Since sensation or stimulation of the nervous system does have a starting point in time (though it might be difficult to isolate such a point), this view coheres with physiological psychology. In *Principles* James talked of the 'blooming, buzzing confusion' (PP 462) of natal experience, and this looks very much like what James is referring to in this 1905 article.

But the Ur-experience view has its drawbacks. Certainly its rarity is a drawback from the point of view of the investigating psychologist. Furthermore, the possibility of useful introspective reports from subjects capable of pure experiences is unlikely, as suspension (or absence) of conceptual processes and language is an accompanying feature of such a state of being. James personally experimented with ether and nitrous oxide in an attempt to provide such a report, but the fruits of his efforts, like those of other experimenters (whom he considered with a typical combination of open- and critical-mindedness), were negligible. He reported similar attempts by a correspondent of his in an article entitled "Consciousness Under Nitrous Oxide" in 1898, and he was fond of citing Benjamin Paul Blood's *The Anaesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy* (1874)[38]. James also discusses the cerebral and phenomenal effects of these drugs, along with hallucinations, optical illusions, dreams and hypnosis in "The Perception of 'Things'" in *Principles*.

Both options involve a certain idealization: the ideal purity of the first moments of cognition, versus the ideal purity of an experience abstractly taken out of its historical context(s). One is fleeting and inaccessible from our perspective as adults, the other has an air of oversimplification that frustrates the empiricist. Neither are actual; both, due to this fact and other reasons, are impractical. James seemed to think the term 'pure' was to be understood in a less literal fashion.[39] In "The Thing and Its Relations" he argued that the purity of an experience "is only a relative term, meaning the proportional amount of unverbalized sensation which it still embodies." (ERE 46) Indeed, there is consistency with the *Principles*

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empiricism and its pluralistic content (25). I have preferred to emphasize the latter, primarily to avoid confusion. (Lamberth's approach differs from herein in his sanguinity about what can be said concerning the nature of pure experience. My own approach is more conservative.

[38] Though occasionally James makes his frustration known. Vide: "In whatever light things may then appear to us [when drunk], they seem more utterly what they are, more 'utterly utter' than when we are sober. This goes to a fully unutterable extreme in the nitrous oxide intoxication, in which a man's very soul will sweat with conviction, and he be all the while unable to tell what he is convinced of at all." (*Principles* p. 914) This was a poke at his friend Blood. A very good overall account of James's drug experiences and their relation to his philosophical and religious beliefs can be found in Dmitri Tymoczko's "The Nitrous Oxide Philosopher", *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1996, pp. 93-101.

[39] Lamberth (*op. cit.*, pp. 23-31) offers a tantalizing interpretation of James's multi-barrelled use of 'pure experience'. On the one hand, there is a 'metaphysical' sense, which admits of a generic function (Lamberth argues James referred to pure experience much as we speak collectively of 'land') and in a specific sense where 'pure experience' refers to a discrete portion of experience, unconnected or processed in any way. Both of these meanings are thought to be conducive to talk of causal connections. There is a further 'phenomenological' sense which roughly characterizes pure experience as qualia. As I read him, Lamberth is attempting to circumvent earlier dilemmas foisted on James by commentators, and he does this by pointing out the dynamic aspects of the metaphysical view of experience, versus the synchronic aspects of its phenomenological sense, but in the end his new distinctions rapidly collapse into objective and subjective senses of 'experience', the very sort of thing James tried to avoid.

on this point, for there he claims "a pure sensation…to be an abstraction never realized in adult life." (PP 722) We shall see below how James's view on the field of consciousness as containing articulated and non-articulated portions affects his picture of the mind, and his picture of psychology.

As the section ends, James makes it clear that he has completed his first exposition of his thesis. "Consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being. *The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations—these relations themselves being experiences—to one another.*" (14) He accordingly turn his attention in the next few sections to objections to his thesis.

Section iv: knowledge as a navigating relation

In his treatment of his conceptual and perceptual examples, the character of an experience is a function of the relations that experience has to subsequent experiences which take up the original and 'know' it. The use of scare quotes is deliberate, for experiences are not thought to be the typical bearers of knowledge. However, James has a theory of knowledge that accounts for this, and he does not use scare quotes. But here in DCE, the theory is not given, except in the barest outline. "I could perfectly well define," he claims, "without the notion of 'consciousness,' what the knowing [of one experience by another] actually and practically amounts to" (14), and while this seems a foreshadowing of the *Pragmatism* lectures to the modern reader, James is really alluding to some of his earlier work[40]. He claims that knowledge amounts to a "leading-towards,…and terminating-in percepts, through a series of transitional experiences which the world supplies" and then says no more on the subject. This is the barest sketch of a theory of knowledge, though it sounds some themes familiar to readers of James: the perceptual terminus of knowledge, and the view of knowledge as a practical matter of getting from A to B, not to mention the treatment of the business of epistemology as finding "what…knowing actually and practically amounts to." Statements like these suggest a strong link between James's metaphysics of pure experience and his pragmatism, though a great many scholars have chosen to separate the two, taking James's remarks elsewhere as their guide.[41] Exploration of the treatment of this topic in the *Principles* will show how James attempted to construct a conception of knowing that was well-grounded in the natural sciences, and said treatment will underscore the importance of this conception of knowledge for James's overall view. Likewise, James's account of

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[40] The two essays he cites in a note are "The Function of Cognition" (1884) and "The Knowing of Things Together" (1895).

[41] The source of the distinction between the two views are James's comments in the preface to *Pragmatism*, where he says radical empiricism "stands on its own feet" and that one may reject his metaphysics and still be a pragmatist. (Richard Rorty takes James up on his offer, pointing that one might be a physicalist and a pragmatist.) It is interesting to note that James qualified his remarks two years later, in his preface to *The Meaning of Truth*, where he cites the acceptance of the pragmatic theory of truth as "a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail." (xxxvi) See Putnam 1990, Cooper 1999 on the relation between the two views. See also below, introduction to chapter two.

knowledge as an 'ability to go on' in an intended direction will highlight an important similarity with Wittgenstein.

Section v: pure experience a catch-all for heterogeneity of experiences

Having skirted the issue of the nature of knowledge with the issuing of a promissory note, James turns to another objection: what kind of stuff is pure experience made of? If this is supposed to supplant the dualism of physical and mental things, what new substance is being postulated? James puts this commonsensical objection in the mouth of an imaginary interlocutor: "Matter we know" say this critic, "and thought we know, and conscious content we know, but neutral and simple 'pure experience' is something we know not at all. Say *what* it consists of—for it must consist of something—or be willing to give it up!" (14) Here James's answer appears frustratingly evasive, though his language is clear enough. He notes that pure experience is not any one kind of thing, unless you wish to group in under the category 'being', and that the term is merely a collection for all the aspects of experience. "[T]here is no *general* stuff of which experience at large is made. There are as many stuffs as there are 'natures' in the things experienced." The only other helpful information he gives as to the nature of pure experience (and James's use of scare quotes suggests this is a poor question) is his enumeration of phenomenal properties. Giving such a list in answer to the question 'what is pure experience made of?' seems to indicate a strong commitment on James's part to some form of phenomenalism, though the majority of commentators either overlook this option, or severely downplay or reinterpret it. James's quick treatment of this question is perplexing, but the next article he published in the radical empiricism series was "A World of Pure Experience", which dealt with ontological matters in more detail, and was published less than a month after DCE.[42]

Section vi: the common ground of thoughts and things

This section deals with an objection James thought worthy of treating at some length. He addresses allegations of contradictions arising from predicating both qualities of thoughts and those of things to experiences. "As thing, the experience is extended; as thought, it occupies no place or space. As thing, it is red, hard, heavy; but who ever heard of a red, hard or heavy thought?" (15) This view, of thoughts and things possessing fundamentally different and incompatible properties, finds its most forceful characterization in Descartes, where this difference is used to establish the case for psychophysical dualism.[43] James must account for the fact that, taken as thing, an experience has extension, location and

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[42] To be precise, the essay was published in two parts, one four weeks after DCE, the sequel two weeks later.

[43] Examples of Descartes treatment of *res cogitans* and its relations to *res extensa* are not hard to find. Consider *Principles of Philosophy*, part one; *Discourse on Method*, part four, as well as his fifth and sixth *Meditations*.

other physical properties, while as a thought it is unextended, and possesses abstract qualities rather than the tangible ones.

James's strategy is to deny the absolute heterogeneity of thoughts and things, allowing that there are differences (which will, for him, account for our taking an experience as the source of a thing or a thought.) But James highlights similarities between the two that he thinks philosophers regularly overlook. "No one denies that they have some categories in common. Their relations to time are identical. Both, moreover, may have parts (for psychologists in general treat thoughts as having them); and both may be complex or simple." (15) James goes on to point out that both thoughts and things can be subjected to operations such as comparison, and they may be arranged with other entities. He also notes that many adjectives we apply to the one can apply to the other (an idea he will expand in the next section).

James's answer might seem sophistical, but it is crucial to understanding his views of knowledge and meaning. He claims that the experience's qualities or properties depend upon the relations that are exploited by the cognizing agent. Taken as a physical object, certain nascent relations are brought to the forefront, or actualized if you like, and the experience is clothed in a physical meaning.[44] Selective attention transforms an experience into a thing. This transformation plays into the hands of the dualist, for it is primarily the subjective aspects of the experience that are de-emphasized when the experience is 'taken up' as a thing. Retrospectively, such a thing seems to have lacked mental qualities all along. Likewise, if the interests of the agent draw out relations to concepts or memories or the like, the experience acquires the characteristics of a thought. The ontological status of an experience, like the species of an organism, is a characteristic emergent over time and recognized after the fact.[45] It is this view of ontology that contributes to James's being labeled a 'process philosopher'.[46]

Concepts, on this account, differ from sensory experiences in being less powerful, less firmly connected to other experiences[47], feeling more under our control, *etc.*, but they are not as discrete as, say, Hume's ideas and impressions were meant to be. James makes a holistic point to round out his criticism of Cartesian-style dualisms:

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[44] The image of giving an object of thought clothing is borrowed from Frege, and as I hope to show, James's thoughts here show some affinity to the former.

[45] An interesting instance of this way of thinking can be found in *The Nature of Living Things* (C. Brooke Worth & Robert K. Enders, Toronto: Signet, 1964), a popular introduction to biology. The idea of species therein is given a functional meaning: two organisms belong to different species when they can no longer interbreed. See pp. 42*ff*.

[46] *E.g.*, Nicholas Rescher, *Process Metaphysics: An Introduction to Process Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY press, 1996.)

[47] This notion of the 'vivacity' of sensations *vis-à-vis* conceptions played a major role in the debates over sense-data theories of perception in the mid-twentieth century. The idea has its origins in Hume, (*Treatise of Human Nature,* Book one, part three) and is criticized by James in *Principles*, pp. 931*ff*.

> How, if 'subject' and 'object' were separated 'by the whole diameter of being,' and had no attributes in common, could it be so hard to tell, in a presented and recognized material object, what part comes in through the sense-organs and what part comes 'out of one's own head'? Sensations and apperceptive ideas fuse here so intimately that you can no more tell where one begins and the other ends, than you can tell, in those cunning circular panoramas that have lately been exhibited, where the real foreground and the painted canvas join together.[48] (16)

Apart from pointing out that the differences between thoughts and things are not absolute, James discusses the isomorphism between them that must obtain if our concepts are to be at all useful. James gives a brief account of the shared form of thoughts and those thoughts' objects. He couches this in terms that are disappointing, for he lapses into a mentalistic style he would argue against in *Pragmatism* (and did previously in *Principles*). In this essay, James suggests "of every extended object the *adequate* mental picture must have all the extension of the object itself." (*ibid.*) "The difference" he goes on to add, "between objective and subjective extension is one of relation to a context only." James argues that there is a mental extension, which our concepts of extended objects possess, which is in some way analogous to physical space.[49] Here he points to the obstinate nature of things when it comes to our manipulation of them. Physical objects are recalcitrant in a way that thoughts are not. The relations that obtain between them are inflexible, impervious to our imagination. Thoughts, on the other hand, are pliant, manipulable; we can arrange them as we like. (He will qualify this claim considerably, robbing it of its subjective flavour.)

James attempts to give a phenomenalistic analysis of the difference between real and imagined objects in a rather famous passage. It is worth quoting at length:

> Why, for example, do we call a fire hot, and water wet, and yet refuse to say that our mental state, when it is 'of' these objects, is either wet or hot? 'Intentionally,' at any rate, and when the mental state is a vivid image, hotness and wetness are in it just as much as they are in the physical experience. The reason is this, that, as the general chaos of all our experiences gets sifted, we find that there are some fires that will always burn sticks and always warm our bodies, and that there are some waters that will always put out fires; while there are other fires and waters that will not act at all. The general group of experiences that *act*, that do not only possess their natures intrinsically, but wear them adjectively and energetically, turning them against one another, comes inevitably to be contrasted with the group whose members, having identically the same natures, fail to manifest them in the 'energetic' way. ... Mental fire is what won't burn real sticks; mental water is what won't necessarily (though of course it may) put out even a mental fire. Mental knives may be sharp, but they won't cut real wood. Mental triangles are pointed, but their points won't wound. With 'real' objects, on the contrary, consequences always accrue; and thus the real experiences get sifted from the mental ones, the things

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[48] James also used this analogy in his discussion of memory. See *Principles*, p. 605.

[49] Of that space, James writes that the extendedness of various experienced objects "bound each other stably, and, added together, make the great enveloping Unit which we believe in and call real Space. As 'outer,' they carry themselves adversely, so to speak, to one another, exclude one another and maintain their distances; while, as 'inner,' their order is loose, and they form a *durcheinander* in which unity is lost." (16)

> from our thoughts of them, fanciful or true, and precipitated together as the stable part of the whole experience-chaos, under the name of the physical world. (17)

James clearly thinks that thoughts and things share many features or attributes, and thus have a common form, though they differ in the robustness of those attributes. It would be more consistent with James to say those attributes are similar but function differently in our lives, which is what he alludes to in this passage. This particular section makes James's position seem quite odd: it looks as though human beings have to sift through their experiences and test them to see whether they ought to be considered real or imaginary. Hilary Putnam comes to James's defence in his reading of this passage, calling attention to James's qualification in the second line. Ideas have their objects' qualities 'intentionally' rather than adjectively, or 'energetically.'[50] James writes:

> Of this our perceptual experiences are the nucleus, they being the originally *strong* experiences. We add a lot of conceptual experiences to them, making these strong also in imagination, and building out the remoter parts of the physical world by their means; and around this core of reality the world of laxly connected fancies and mere rhapsodical objects floats like a bank of clouds. In the clouds, all sorts of rules are violated which in the core are kept. Extensions there can be indefinitely located; motion there obeys no Newton's laws. (17-18)

It is tempting to see in this a 'defence of rhapsody' which no doubt would have irked Wittgenstein, given his preoccupation with clarity, the sense of a proposition, and 'what can be said'. But note this preoccupation with workable connections (whether among words, or between concepts and perceptual experience) reflects a strong commitment to the pragmatic method. Furthermore, James's own analysis does not linger on the fancies and rhapsodies. In this passage, ideas derived from his psychology play an important role in clarifying radical empiricism. The psychological development of an organism via interaction with its environment is assumed as a background for any person's creating an ontology. From a nucleus of perceptual experience, concepts are formed and a larger world is found via the combination of these processes. James's talk of mental knives and mental fire is not a description of an overt, articulate process we undertake each day, but a synopsis of a much longer process which probably never dominated our attention. The discovery that we can imagine things we are not currently perceiving is bound up with the discovery that imagined objects are pliable in a way that perceptions are not. It is this psychological process that James's clumsy passage alludes to. Thus we may see a close relation between *the Essays in Radical Empiricism* and *Principles*, where the latter provides physiological and introspective support for metaphysical claims made in the former. Each work leans on the other to stand fully upright.

Another unfortunate aspect of James's phrasing here is his portrayal of thoughts as inner objects, representations or images. While he does not expunge such things from his philosophy of mind, James argued forcefully throughout his career for a pragmatic, non-representational view of concepts. He treated

concepts as functions leading from one experience to another, not as mental pictures. This passage gives the contrary impression, which makes his metaphysics of pure experience look like idealism.[51] This will be discussed in greater detail in each of the succeeding chapters. Whether or not Wittgenstein's philosophy is an improvement over James's will turn primarily on how James's theory of ideas is construed.

Section vii: Platypus experiences and wandering adjectives

Having made his case for the virtues of an evolutionary story of processing pure experience and turning it into experiences in a dual universe, James suggests some problems for the old view that might support his own theory. He cites problematic experiences—experiences that defy our attempts to categorize them, and it is interesting to note how grammatical confusions are highlighted. Like Wittgenstein, James reveled in finding unclear instances that called traditional philosophical pictures into doubt. The cases he chooses are most interesting, beginning with his first example, aesthetic appreciation. These experiences form "an ambiguous sphere of being, belonging with emotion on the one hand, and having objective 'value' on the other, yet seeming not quite inner nor quite outer, as if a diremption had begun but had not made itself complete." (18) James selects an aspect of human life that is particularly resistant to attempts to subjectivize or objectivize it, and describes it in terms reminiscent of the platypus, an animal that straddles familiar conceptual boundaries, and suggests to our minds that those boundaries are not what they once seemed.

Here James makes some remarks about language and the mind that are particularly interesting, building on his comments on the isomorphism between thoughts and their objects. He considers other examples: "experiences of painful objects…are usually also painful experiences; perceptions of loveliness, of ugliness, tend to pass muster as lovely or as ugly perceptions; intuitions of the morally lofty are lofty intuitions." These are all difficult cases for a simple (and absolute) dualism. Moral and aesthetic value claim some sort of universal assent (if we agree with Kant), and yet they seem rooted in our psyches, pulling emotions out of us and causing us to reflect on our desires for the state of the world. Pain seems to have a clearly subjective aspect, yet often it has a physical location, or is so deeply associated with its object that we cannot distinguish the two.[52] James muses, "sometimes the adjective wanders as if uncertain

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[50] "James's Theory of Perception", in *Realism With a Human Face*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990), p. 237. Putnam goes on to discuss the Meinongian strain in James's radical empiricism, and Russell's transforming the latter in to 'neutral monism.'

[51] James returned to his anti-representational view in the later essays in radical empiricism, especially in "How Two Minds Can Know One Thing". As for viewing the world as a collection of ideas, James saw this as a temptation for philosophers because of their overemphasis on the role of concepts in knowledge. His frequent talk of the 'abuse of concepts' and our 'vicious intellectualism' was in part aimed at redirecting knowledge of the external world to our immediate sensory environment.

[52] In discussing pain-sensations, Wittgenstein came to a similar realization, and frequently used this as a means of critiquing sense-data empiricism. See *Philosophical Remarks* (ca. 1930), which contains nascent or 'transitional' thoughts on this topic.

where to fix itself." It is worth noting how confusions about language occupy James's attention here where he is investigating experiences that do not conform to normal expectations. He engages in a line of questioning that anticipates that of many of the philosophers who would come after him:

> Shall we speak of seductive visions or of visions of seductive things? Of wicked desires or of desires for wickedness? Of healthy thoughts or of thoughts of healthy objects? Of good impulses, or of impulses towards the good? Of feelings of anger, or of angry feelings? Both in the mind and in the thing, these natures modify their context, exclude certain associates and determine others, have their mates and incompatibles. Yet not as stubbornly as in the case of physical qualities, for beauty and ugliness, love and hatred, pleasant and painful can, in certain complex experiences, coexist. (18)[53]

This willingness to accept ambiguous experiences as transgressors of the dualism between mental and physical is a good example of James's pluralism: he denies the need to engage in reduction of these phenomena to some conceptual scheme, and this despite his parsimonious inclinations. Like Wittgenstein, his attention to the variety of experiences leads him away from a simple metaphysical scheme, and for James, this is just 'telling it like it is.' And like Wittgenstein, James would use this variety to disassemble traditional positions, opening up new ground for his proffered account.

As for his evolutionary story, he ends this section by highlighting how his ambiguous cases support this interpretation:

> If one were to make an evolutionary construction of how a lot of originally chaotic pure experiences became gradually differentiated into an orderly inner and outer world, the whole theory would turn upon one's success in explaining how or why the quality of an experience, once active, could become less so, and, from being an energetic attribute in some cases, elsewhere lapse into the status of an inert or merely internal 'nature.' This would be the 'evolution' of the psychical from the bosom of the physical, in which the esthetic, moral and otherwise emotional experiences would represent a halfway stage. (*ibid.*)

Experiences can be developed or 'traced along differing lines', hence, they can be made into kinds of experiences—physical, mental, what have you. The clarity of our habits and interests conditions the ontological clarity of the resulting 'cooked' experiences we produce. The simplicity of a scheme of two basic kinds of experience may appear, to a philosopher, at any rate, to be the determining factor in the results achieved in cognition. But the features of our existence may push those results into a less perspicuous form.

Section viii: we confuse our physical sensations—breathing, *etc.*—with a 'mental stream'

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[53] This is not an isolated incidence: as I will later demonstrate, James made such grammatical remarks at similarly strategic moments in the *Principles*.

For his conclusion, James considers a psychological objection, *viz*., that it is impossible to overcome our habits of thought and consider experience to be anything other than a dualism. This is actually a fairly strong objection for James, who promulgated a theory of action and choice premised on selection among 'live options' for belief. An option that appears ridiculous or impossible is *ex hypothesi* not available in philosophical debate. James responds by calling attention to what might be called an introspective illusion. He notes that it would not be unusual to object to his theory on the basis of one's own feeling of thought "flowing as a life within us, in absolute contrast with the objects which it so unremittingly escorts." (19) Thought flows, while objects external to us do not. But where could this 'flowing' quality come from? The illusion James points to is one that deeply impressed Wittgenstein (see below, chapter three).

James uses a closer look at introspection to dispel the introspective illusion, *i.e*., introspection reveals there is no 'inner' mental life, but there are causes for mistaking there to be. James gives an anthropological explanation for this confusion, pointing to the same respiratory and kinaesthetic phenomena as the source of the ancient idea of an 'anima' or spirit.[54] "[T]he stream of thinking (which I recognize emphatically as a phenomenon) is only a careless name for what, when scrutinized, reveals itself to consist chiefly of the stream of my breathing." (*ibid*.) James points to his own earlier discussion of this introspective illusion in "The Consciousness of Self" in *Principles*, and highlights how this has mislead past philosophers. "The 'I think' which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects, is the 'I breathe' which actually does accompany them." This is a significant statement for a philosopher often inaccurately characterized as an introspectionist pure and simple. James (I hope to show) will argue for a theory of consciousness as a higher, emergent function of the human organism, which manifests itself in a variety of forms in our life. It is unlike the sort of thing or entity previous philosophers have taken it to be. While James is critical of naïve introspection (as 'evidence'—as an indubitable feeling that we know consciousness exists) he also is cautious here to avoid physicalistic reductionism here, which is an obvious temptation for readers who do not share his leanings towards a neutral metaphysics.

The *Weltanschauung*, as seen in 'Does "Consciousness" Exist?':

This, then, is James's world of pure experience, which Russell would, fifteen years later, popularize as 'neutral monism'. It is an application of what James called 'radical empiricism' and was designed to reconcile idealism and realism, and was developed (as advertised) rather directly out of James's philosophy of mind. (By that I mean that James took the mind-body problem as a catalyst for a larger change: of language, our naïve ontology, and theory of knowledge). It is an essay to which he later referred readers

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[54] It is worth recalling that in Latin both 'spiritus' and 'anima' have rich and equivocal meanings. 'Spritus' means breathing, breath, air, life, soul, pride and courage, and is derived from the verb spriare (to breathe). 'Anima' is synonymous with breath, air, life and soul, and derives from the Latin verb 'animare', or 'to quicken.' Furthermore, 'anima' bears comparison to the Greek *anemos* ('wind') and to the Sanskrit *aniti* ('breathe'). I refer the reader to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, (Oxford University Press, 1966), pages 38, 854.

for clarification, and in his plan for *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, it occupies the vanguard position that was seen upon posthumous publication of that volume in 1912. At the time of its original publication, the essay was the first in a series, the first few appearing within weeks of DCE, and continuing into 1905. These metaphysical essays were alongside a number of his writings on pragmatism, which would soon occupy more of James's time and attention, and which, he thought, would buttress his metaphysics by providing a palatable epistemology to complement it. This long and detailed treatment of the essay in its entirety should help to demonstrate the detail and complexity of what is usually taken to be a simplistic and untenable metaphysical theory. As we move to consider the *Principles*, certain aspects of James's psychology should be easier to understand in their proper context, and the presuppositions for this philosophy articulated late in life should also become clear. The two texts should illuminate one another. The claims of the eight sections of the essay show an interesting nexus of ideas that also display some resemblance to the later Wittgenstein. These claims may be summarized as follows:

1. The dualism between subject and object, or between mental and physical, is a misleading picture.
2. Experience, as natively given, is neither intrinsically physical nor mental. The context of our subsequent thinking assigns that experience to a realm.
3. A concept is no different in this regard: we can treat it either as an object of psychology, or use that concept logically, *i.e.*, combine it with other concepts for a particular purpose, with no thought of its relation to our stream of thought. (The natural purpose of concepts is knowing; concepts extend our experience beyond our immediate perceptions, and are indeed taken together to form a larger world.)
4. Knowledge is an external relation which obtains between experiences. We know something when our thought can lead to an expected set of perceptual experiences, i.e., when we know how to get an experience.
5. Experience is not any one intrinsic kind of stuff. Assigning a character to experience occurs *ex post facto*, and reflects our interests.
6. While mental and physical contexts are not identical, neither are they mutually exclusive categories. They share some features, while other features point to functions that appear isomorphic, but have different domains of application. Thoughts share a form with their objects, without which they could not be compared to their objects.
7. Sometimes experiences confuse us. We do not know where to assign them in our scheme of things, and this confusion is reflected in language.
8. Intuiting a dualism in experience is due to a perceptual confusion: we are dimly aware of the stream of our breathing, and take it to be evidence for a stream of thought. Thoughts are just as concrete, just as real, as things.

The epistemological and semantic aspects of James's theory can be seen more clearly through the pragmatism essays, but to get some idea of James's radical empiricism, a look back at the *Principles* is required, for that book contains both an application and a muted statement of many of the ideas underwriting James's metaphysics. It is, of course, also the book with which Wittgenstein was most familiar and from which his citations of James were taken.

***Principles*, Preface through "Relations of Minds to Other Things"**

While some commentators read *Principles* as a straightforward treatise on behaviourism, others choose to see it as a monument to introspection, pulling metaphysical ideas out of the author's own head in a method recently dubbed "Jack Horner phenomenology" (Gale, *op. cit.*, p. 274). The former interpretation looks at the historical impact of the book, the latter to a few chapters subsequently studied by philosophers. Neither reading is accurate, and closer reading quickly uncovers this.

The preface to *Principles* is particularly noteworthy for contemporary readers, in that James makes some prescient comments about metaphysics, as if to hint at his later philosophy. At the same time, he acknowledges the limitations of the strictly positivistic approach he intends to use. He also makes clear in the preface his assumption of a dualism, and hints at the provisional nature of this commitment. To quote at length:

> I have kept close to the point of view of natural science throughout the book. Every natural science assumes certain data uncritically, and declines to challenge the elements between which its own 'laws' obtain, and from which its own deductions are carried on. Psychology, the science of finite individual minds, assumes, as its data (1) *thoughts and feelings*[55], and (2) *a physical world* in time and space with which they coexist and which (3) *they know*. Of course these data are discussable; but the discussion of them (as of other elements) is called metaphysics and falls outside the province of this book. This book, assuming that thoughts and feelings exist and are vehicles of knowledge, thereupon contends that psychology when she has ascertained the empirical correlation of the various sorts of thought or feeling with definite conditions of the brain, can go no farther—can go no farther, that is, as a natural science. If she goes farther she becomes metaphysical. All attempts to *explain* our phenomenally given thoughts as products of deeper-lying entities (whether the latter be named 'Soul,' 'Transcendental Ego,' 'Ideas,' or 'Elementary Units of Consciousness') are metaphysical. This book consequently rejects both the associationist and the spiritualist theories; and in this strictly positivistic point of view consists the only feature of it for which I feel tempted to claim originality. (6)[56]

Here James seems to be offering a psychology free of philosophical commitments, free of speculative claims about the ultimate nature of the universe. If we were to compare this passage alone to Wittgenstein's later writings, we could see how James would be a target for criticism. To claim to do 'pure' psychology, and thus immunize one's work from philosophical doubts and confusions, seems both arrogant and foolish. James's three assumptions positively cry out for philosophical discussion, and James seems to be unaware of this. Yet consider the continuation of his preface:

> "Of course this point of view is anything but ultimate. Men must keep thinking; and the data assumed by psychology, just like those assumed by physics and the other natural sciences, must some time be overhauled. The effort to overhaul them clearly and

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[55] The use of these terms in combination is significant. Consider Myers' analysis: "Emotion and thought can be regarded as siblings which, though capable of mutual hostility, enjoy a common birthsite. There is a Hegelian suggestion in James's philosophy that feeling, sensation, and thought are primoridally related, gradually emerging from an originally shared cocoon into separate identities." (*Op. cit.*, p. 242.)

[56] Hereafter parenthetical numbers refer to page numbers in *Principles*.

> thoroughly is metaphysics; but metaphysics can only perform her task well when distinctly conscious of its great extent."

This is one of the few places where James actually defines metaphysics. Given his comments above, metaphysics appears to be less speculative and more critical that many have assumed.[57] James sounds a more measured note when discussing the disentanglement of science and metaphysics:

> "Metaphysics fragmentary, irresponsible, and half-awake, and unconscious that she is metaphysical, spoils two good things when she injects herself into a natural science. And it seems to me that the theories both of a spiritual agent and of associated 'ideas' are, as they figure in the psychology-books, just such metaphysics as this. Even if their results be true, it would be as well to keep them, *as thus presented*, out of psychology as it is to keep the results of idealism out of physics."

This caution dictates James's postulating a parallelism between mind and brain, but not indulging in explanation of it. He states that he "has treated our passing thoughts as integers, and regarded the mere laws of their coexistence with brain-states as the ultimate laws for our science." Aware of the possibility of frustrating his readers by assuming such correlation of mind and brain, he says of his book "it is mainly a mass of descriptive details, running out into queries which only a metaphysics alive to the weight of her task can hope successfully to deal with. That will perhaps be centuries hence; and meanwhile the best mark of health that a science can show is this unfinished-seeming front." (7)

The preface behind him, James didn't exactly jump into his treatment of introspection. A great deal of physiology and experimental work was presupposed, and preceded the chapters on 'mental life' in the text itself. Philosophical clarification also occupied James's attention prior to offering any of his own thoughts on the character and causes of mental life. A guiding theme throughout the book is the unmasking of the two dominant theories in philosophical psychology, spiritualism and associationism. These are roughly the equivalent of what we mean today by 'rationalism' and 'empiricism', and James's attacks on these two schools of thought were relentless and powerful. In the early chapters of *Principles*, his focus was on how these schools make hypotheses about consciousness that hinder experimentation and fly in the face of then-current beliefs about brain morphology and physiology. Epiphenomenal theories of consciousness, and the

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[57] The distinction between critical and speculative metaphysics can be traced back to Kant, but is nonetheless treated with scepticism in our time. Given the tendency to read back into history a certain watershed (which some would place in 1903 with Moore's publication of "A Refutation of Idealism", others in 1934 with Carnap's "*Aufhebung der Metaphysic durch logische Analysis der Sprache*"), after which philosophers suddenly became aware of how intrinsically speculative and unverifiable metaphysics was, the survivors of this revolution therefore typically recanted any claimed desire to engage in metaphysical thinking, it is tempting to see James as deluded on this point. However, careful attention to his radical empiricism essays, the pragmatic works, and the *Principles* reveals James to be primarily devoted to clearing away the confusions and obstacles caused by philosophy in the hopes of enhancing our knowledge of the human mind. This is a major reason for Hilary Putnam's linking Kant, James and Wittgenstein in a single tradition or line of thought. See his *Pragmatism: An Open Question*, lectures one and two.

belief that the mind was built out of minute ideas, or 'mind dust' served as the targets for James's attacks, and in the process provided him with a stage to parade his naturalistic views about the mind.

The Stream of Thought (*Principles*, Chapter IX)

When James finally does turn to "the study of the mind from within" (219) he announces what would become his major modification of empiricism. Denying that simple sensations are the ultimate data of introspective psychology, James claims: "No one ever had a simple sensation by itself. Consciousness, from our natal day, is of a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations, and what we call simple sensations are results of discriminative attention, pushed often to a very high degree." James in effect turns empiricism on its head. Complexes such as my awareness of the room in which I write are not built from simpler bits of sensory information, they are the plenum from which such simples are built. James suggests this conclusion can be derived from starting with a simple assumption: thinking goes on. The task is then to scrutinize the activity free from any dogmatic assumptions. (Interestingly, James makes a brief point about language along the way: "If we could say in English 'it thinks,' as we say 'it rains' or 'it blows,' we should be stating the fact most simply and with the minimum of assumption. As we cannot, we must simply say that *thought goes on.*" (220)"[58]

In addressing the question of *how* thought goes on, that is, the question of thought's character, James enumerates five prima facie aspects of thinking that he will devote the bulk of this chapter to exploring. He writes:

> 1) Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness.
> 2) Within each personal consciousness thought is always changing.
> 3) Within each personal consciousness thought is sensibly continuous.
> 4) It always appears to deal with objects independent of itself.
> 5) It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects—*chooses* from among them, in a word—all the while." (220)

I shall therefore talk of thought's personal character, its flux, phenomenal continuity, intentionality, and selectivity hereafter. The reader should refer to James's list (*hic*) if clarification is desired.

The personal character of a thought (pp. 220-224)

In examining thought's tending to be personal, James relies on several elements of his 'pure experience' analysis, as it would later appear in DCE. The first thing he notes is that, despite the physical proximity or interaction of thinkers, thoughts remain anchored to their respective owners. "My thought belongs with my

other thoughts, and your thought with your other thoughts. Whether anywhere in the room there be a mere thought, which is nobody's thought, we have no means of ascertaining, for we have no experience of its like.[59] The only states of consciousness we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousnesses, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and you's" (220-1)

Something like ownership seems to bind groups of thoughts together over time, and this is a significant starting point for James's analysis. He does not start from physicalism and then link thoughts to brains, rather, he ignores the mind/brain connection and proceeds (temporarily) without support from that quarter. Furthermore, the separation between knowers appears to be absolute, "Neither contemporaneity, nor proximity in space, nor similarity of quality and content are able to fuse thoughts together which are sundered by this barrier of belonging to different personal minds. The breaches between such thoughts are the most absolute breaches in nature." (221). This last sentence is an extraordinary statement to be sure, considering that the only support given is a brief bit of common-sense introspection. The statement is not as naïve as it seems. It is worth noting here a similarity with Wittgenstein's style of philosophical analysis: James lumps temporal and spatial relations together with qualitative and quantitative ones and asks why none of these seem to touch the feature of thought he is examining. Most philosophers would not attempt such a comparison, seeing in such talk a gross violation of what everyone already knows.

James addresses an unnamed critic who sees such an analysis as indulging in unnecessary anthropomorphism, and indeed, one could take the connection between thoughts as an unnamed relation, precipitously given the title 'personal' by the over-eager James. But James tips his hand regarding his analysis of the self that will follow in the next chapter. Personifying the stream of thought, he argues "could only be a blunder if the notion of personality meant something essentially different from anything to be found in the mental procession. But if that procession be itself the very 'original' of the notion of personality, to personify it cannot possibly be wrong." (221). James sees himself as describing a native feature of thought from which our concept of 'personal' is constructed; rather than engaging in obvious circularity, James is returning from the chicken to the egg. The connections between thoughts he is describing obtain; this, he argues, can be introspectively discovered by anyone: I cannot mistakenly have someone else's thought. The feeling of personal ownership of thought is primitive. "There are no marks of personality to be gathered *aliunde*, and then found lacking in the train of thought. It has them already; so that to whatever farther analysis we may subject that form of personal selfhood under which thoughts appear, it is, and must remain, true that the thoughts which psychology studies do continually tend to appear as parts of personal selves." (221-222) . The cautious language in the last sentence allows James to

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[58] This idea had been made famous a century earlier by Lichtenberg, but James does not cite him. See notebook K of Lichtenberg's *Aphorisms* (p. 168 of the Penguin Classic edition.)

[59] It would seem a small point to anyone but James, but he makes this allowance here and in the preface to *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), "Things of an unexperienceable nature may exist ad libitum, but they form no part of the material for philosophic debate." (MT, 6-7)

include the 'stunted' selves of hysterics (specifically, hysterical anaesthesia, the inability to perceive sensory stimulation which a subject gives evidence of having felt) and other cases of abnormal consciousness in his account of mental life; they appear as pathologies which exhibit partial features of normal consciousness, but are not wholly different from normal mentality, and James's case studies seem to support his views on personal identity, which admits of degrees. James's digression is designed to support the view that while "the *size* of a secondary self…will depend on the number of thoughts that are thus split-off from the main consciousness, the *form* of it tends to personality, and the later thoughts pertaining to it remember the earlier ones and adopt them as their own." (222). Even the most truncated selves, on this view, are held together by one part of the stream of thought appropriating a past segment of the stream. Here James's theory supports and predates twentieth century views of abnormal psychology which portray the mind/brain system as very active and flexible in its responses to injury and trauma—truncated selves being the best a brain can produce under certain circumstances.[60]

The connection between personality and memory can be seen more clearly if one considers James's termination of his digression on truncated selves. He disagrees with Janet, who, in his study of anaesthetical and catatonic patients, imputes to their behaviour thoughts unowned by a self. This bears quotation at length, for it shows how James's claims about consciousness are not tied to introspection alone, but also depend upon careful examination of case studies:

> Beneath these tracts of thought, which, however rudimentary, are still organized selves with a memory, habits, and sense of their own identity, M. Janet thinks that the facts of catalepsy in hysteric patients drive us to suppose that there are thoughts quite unorganized and impersonal. A patient in cataleptic trance (which can be produced artificially in certain hypnotized subjects) is without memory on waking, and seems insensible and unconscious as long as the cataleptic condition lasts. If, however, one raises the arm of such a subject it stays in that position, and the whole body can thus be moulded like was under the hands of the operator, retaining for a considerable time whatever attitude he communicates to it. In hysterics whose arm, for example, is anaesthetic, the same thing may happen. The anaesthetic arm may remain passively in positions which it is made to assume; or if the hand be taken and made to hold a pencil and trace a certain letter, it will continue tracing that letter indefinitely on the paper. These acts, until recently, were supposed to be accompanied by no consciousness at all: they were physiological reflexes. M. Janet considers with much more plausibility that feeling escorts them. The feeling is probably merely that of the position or movement of the limb, and it produces no more than its natural effects when it discharges into the motor centres which keep the position maintained, or the movement incessantly renewed. Such thoughts as these, says M. Janet, "are known by *no one*, for disaggregated sensations reduced to a state of mental dust are not synthetized [*sic*] in any personality." He admits, however, that these very same unutterably stupid thoughts tend to develop memory,—the cataleptic ere long moves her arm at a bare hint; so that they form no

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[60] One of James's methodological reasons for this insistence that thought tends towards a personal form is his sensationalism – often expressed by his slogan 'esse est sentiri'. The ramifications of this view will be examined in the next chapter. As for modern psychologists/neurologists' reflections on the teleological aspects of consciousness in the face of trauma, stress or other deficits, see A. Luria, *The Making of Mind*, and Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*.

> important exception to the law that all thought tends to assume the form of personal consciousness. (223-4)

This re-examination of another psychologist's conclusions and observations is typical of James's approach. He believed much current work was skewed by philosophical presumptions, and his own positions grew out of the disentangling of others'. In this case, James argues that the evidence for the personal nature of thought can be seen to be more than just the immediate feeling of ownership: it is shown through modification of behaviour. Habit and memory thus play a crucial role in both the clinician's discerning identity and the more philosophical task of discerning continuity in a being over time. (Agency must be thought of as roughly continuous for us to ascribe a personal quality to an action or event.) The fact that a hypnotized subject has no recollection of an activity, be it habitual or more obviously intentional, is no proof for the view that there are thoughts that are (in whatever sense) 'unowned'. James's talk of thoughts having a personal quality is troublesome, however, not least because of the common sense concept of 'person' that is built upon such native qualia as 'feeling to be mine' (or 'feeling personal' to put it abstractly). I suggest that given James's concluding talk of memory and habit, a better manner of conveying James's basic idea would be to say that *thought tends to have a character*. This term conveys the persistence or continuity out of which our idea of personal identity is built, without leading us in circles.

Flux (pp. 224-230)

James devotes this section of his exposition to establishing one of the more crucial theses in his overall philosophy of mind. In explaining his claim that thought is in constant change, he will reveal his basic Heraclitean orientation towards the phenomenal world, but more importantly, he will argue that in the stream of thought, "*no state once gone can recur and be identical with what it was before.*" (224). You really can't step into the same river twice, according to James. Claiming that mental states cannot recur is a stronger claim that the idea that the flow of the stream of thought is a fundamental property thereof; James will need to defend his claim.

Apart from noting the sheer variety of thoughts that occupy our minds in the course of a typical day, there are two ideas at work in defending this claim about the non-recurrence of mental states. James will first make a phenomenological point about how our stream of thought natively appears, and then follow this with a physiological point about how brains work. (Of course, it is brains upon which minds are assumed to depend for their functioning.) The phenomenological point is used as a premise in an argument against Locke, who thought that our state of mind was a composite affair, where certain stable elements were combined in new ways. For Locke, novelty in mental life was a matter of rearrangement of simple ideas, the mental equivalent, says James, of atoms or molecules.

In looking at the stream of thought, it appears that Locke is correct: we do apprehend certain feelings or thoughts at successive times with little effort. Memory itself would seem to be nothing but this recovery of

the same idea from one's past stream of thought. But what is apprehended, says James, is the same object of thought, and this is not the same thing as having the same thought over again. Thoughts therefore can differ while having identical objects. James explains thusly:

> "We hear the same *note* over and over again; we see the same *quality* of green, or smell the same objective perfume, or experience the same *species* of pain. The realities, concrete and abstract, physical and ideal, whose permanent existence we believe in, seem to be constantly coming up against before our thought, and lead us, in our carelessness, to suppose that our 'ideas' of them are the same ideas." (225)

This is a remarkable passage, one that connects James's thoughts on the stream of thought to his later essays on consciousness. Herein precepts and concepts are treated as species of a larger genus (*viz.*, substantive parts of the stream of thought), the existence of entities, whether physical objects, abstractions, or qualia, are cashed out in terms of belief (in chapter XXI of *Principles*, this idea is treated in more detail in chapter two, below), and those beliefs spawn a conceptual confusion, which James takes pains to expose. The confusion of thought with a thought's object was a preoccupation of James. It is mentioned in other chapters (vii, later in chapter ix, at 233, 268, in chapter x at 346, *Cf.* xii, xiii;) as well as many of his essays and notes.[61]

In the conclusion of the passage on flux James foreshadows a later discussion relevant to our concerns here: he promises to discuss how we habitually look through our thoughts to their objects. This is a notion that has some bearing on the confusion he attempts to resolve. It will also be necessary to explain this psychological process in light of his fourth feature of the stream of thought, intentionality.

The physiological point that James goes on to make is tied to his introspective analysis. While we see a green lawn as uniform in colour, James the former student of painting points out that to render faithfully the hues that are sensed, a painter would have to capture many different tones, and use contrasting pigments to give the effect of uniform colour that is perceived.[62] James was well aware of the many layers of

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[61] His analysis in "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" was designed to remove the confusion: since we are capable of taking an experience and incorporating in a variety of functional situations, the experience is natively neither physical nor mental, neither objective nor subjective *in toto*. Each interpretation is an abstraction, where some aspects of the experience are isolated and idealized, while others retreat from our center of consciousness. Whether we are talking about the thought or about the thought's object can be seen by looking at the context of use, or in other words, the situation in which the thinker is thinking. (*E.g.*, a thought about doughnuts can have an objective character in the situation of pondering what to have for breakfast, while the same thought is attended to 'as a thought' when used as an example of a mental state in a psychology class.) The actual character of this development reflects our selectivity in favor of our interests, which returns us to one of the qualities of thought sketched in "The Stream of Thought".

[62] While talk of art might seem out of place here, the reader should remember that in European art in the 1870s and 1880s there was an influential movement, pioneered by Seurat among others, that endeavoured to formulate an approach to painting that was faithful to the physiology of visual perception. The so-called pointillism of that period was just one theory among many. James would probably have rejected the theory for its use of 'colour atoms', to the exclusion of other kinds of visual processing (and contemporary views

processing that took place in vision. His point here was that the consistency perceived in the stream of thought was an exaggeration or distortion of what we might call the 'given' of sensation, this distortion resulting from our processing of sensory information. "We take no heed, as a rule, of the different way in which the same things look and sound and smell at different distances and under different circumstances. The sameness of the *things* is what we are concerned to ascertain; and any sensations that assure us of that will probably be considered in a rough way to be the same with each other." (226). James's conclusion about this is straightforward: "This is what makes off-hand testimony about the subjective identity of different sensations well-nigh worthless as proof of the fact." (*ibid.*) James is here beginning to make a distinction between sensation and perception, which will clarify his position on introspective evidence considerably. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

He goes on to cite more physiological evidence to support his claim that no thought can be an exact re-incidence of an earlier one:

> There are facts that make us believe that our sensibility is altering all the time, so that the same object cannot easily give us the same sensation over again. The eye's sensibility to light is at its maximum when the eye is first exposed, and blunts itself with surprising rapidity. A long night's sleep will make it see things twice as brightly on wakening, as simple rest by closure will make it see them later in the day. We feel things differently according as we are sleepy or awake, hungry or full, fresh or tired; differently at night and in the morning, differently in summer and in winter; and above all things differently in childhood, manhood, and old age. Yet we never doubt that our feelings reveal the same world, with the same sensible qualities and the same sensible things occupying it. The difference of the sensibility is shown best by the difference of our emotion about the things from one age to another, or when we are in different organic moods. What was bright and exciting becomes weary, flat, and unprofitable. The bird's song is tedious, the breeze is mournful, the sky is sad. (226; *Cf.* Wittgenstein's remarks in the *Tractatus*: "The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man." (6.43))

James calls these conditions "indirect presumptions" as far as the argument at hand goes, which is a bit disingenuous given the highly emotive examples he uses to round off his point. But a more important idea is added when he brings neurology (and his assumption of psychophysical parallelism) to bear on the question. "Every sensation" he argues, "corresponds to some cerebral action. For an identical sensation to recur it would have to occur the second time *in an unmodified brain*. But as this, strictly speaking, is a physiological impossibility, so is an unmodified feeling an impossibility; for to every brain-modification, however small, must correspond a change of equal amount in the feeling which the brain subserves." (227) This is one aspect of James's holism, the varieties of which will be described in chapter two. It is his Darwinian view of the brain that underwrites his claim that the brain cannot return to an earlier state.

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would vindicate him on this.) I mention this to undermine that tired 'art versus science' dichotomy, should it linger in the occasional mind.

Brains are complex entities, shaped by environmental factors. Indeed, the fact that animals move through an environment is the reason they have nervous systems, as opposed to plants, which do not (James notes this difference at 25.) Connections between neurons[63] are constantly changing in strength, even after the physical growth of the brain has ceased. Neural pathways are continually being either strengthened or weakened by experience. (At a level of networks, talk of alteration would be more apt, but here I am attempting to restrict the point to a single connection.) Activation or neglect shapes the future pathways via enhancement, fatigue, or atrophy. Because James viewed the brain as a plastic entity, constantly being partially shaped by its environment, he had reason to believe it was too complex for it to be likely to return to a previous state. But James did not choose to make this probabilistic argument the basis of his claim.[64] Rather, James took it as a postulate of his psychology that stimuli, by virtue of energizing the nerve pathways, altered the brain irrevocably. The amount of change might be minute, but reorganization was assumed to occur. "Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the whole world up to that date." (228) This is a form of neural Darwinism: stimulation will alter pathways in some way, while lack of stimulation will lead to atrophy of some sort. Thus, changes in the brain have the same irrevocability seen in ecosystems: success and failure of individuals (neural pathways) constitutes an alteration of the environment (the organism), where the successful have a greater impact on their surroundings, and the unsuccessful lose ground. With a different environment in place, even if a stimulus were to reoccur, a new outcome would result. Even if the gross outcome appears the same (the organism displays the same behaviour, for example), the neural route to this set of motor discharges is different, if only in the matter of local intensity in some pathways, and this, for James, is an important fact not to be overlooked. Small differences may 'stack the deck' in a way that will make a big difference in future circumstances.

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[63] James's publication of the *Principles* essentially predates the neuronal theory, which was first proposed in the late 1880s—the influential papers by Ramón y Cajal appearing in 1890. The debate between the reticular and neuronal theories did not gain widespread attention until some years later. (See J. C. Eccles, *The Physiology of Synapses*, New York: Academic Press, 1964.)

[64] "Our earlier chapters have taught us to believe that, whilst we think, our brain changes, and that, like the aurora borealis, its whole internal equilibrium shifts with every pulse of change. The precise nature of the shifting at a given moment is a product of many factors. The accidental state of local nutrition or blood-supply may be among them. But just as one of them certainly is the influence of outward objects on the sense-organs during the moment, so is another certainly the very special susceptibility in which the organ has been left at that moment by all it has gone through in the past. Every brain-state is partly determined by the nature of this entire past succession. Alter the latter in any part, and the brain-state must be somewhat different….It is out of the question, then, that any total brain-state should identically recur. Something like it may recur; but to suppose *it* to recur would be equivalent to the absurd admission that all the states that had intervened between its two appearances had been pure nonentities, and that the organ after their passage was exactly as it was before." (228) *Cf.* James's note at 229: "It need of course not follow, because a total brain-state does not recur, that no *point* of the brain can ever be twice in the same condition." Here James cites low probability as a reason to treat such occurrences as inconsequential. Since James took the points of the brain to be connected and interacting, such recurrence was of limited import.

James adds one more point to the debate: his teleological story of brain changes would hold true even if sensations were as simple as the empiricists took them to be. However, sensation is itself a complex affair, with any perception of an object, colour, taste, etc., involving an act of separation, the subject discriminating this item from a diverse sensory plenum. So his tale is one of interacting complexes: a complicated sensory 'given' forms the stimuli for an ever-changing nervous system. Given the plasticity and teleological nature of the brain, and the richness of any moment's sensory manifold, our conceptual simplifying of our world has an obvious utility. James cites Heraclitus approvingly, and he goes on to give more evidence for this thesis: he discusses our growth as agents, both in terms of cognition and activity.[65]

The upshot of James's flux thesis is to put an end to atomistic empiricism. He sounds this end with characteristic zeal:

> No doubt it is often *convenient* to formulate the mental facts in an atomistic sort of way, and to treat the higher states of consciousness as if they were all built out of unchanging simple ideas. It is convenient often to treat curves as if they were composed of small straight lines, and electricity and nerve-force as if they were fluids. But in the one case as in the other we must never forget that we are talking symbolically, and that there is nothing in nature to answer to our words. *A permanently existing 'idea' or 'Vorstellung' which makes its appearance before the footlights of consciousness at periodical intervals, is as mythological an entity as the Jack of Spades.*

This shows James's keen awareness of the dangers associated with symbols, analogies, and our other tools for simplifying the subject matter of investigation. He digresses to make a point about the relation of language to psychology, with which we need not concern ourselves at the moment.

The flux of the stream of thought is only one side of James's psychology; despite the dynamic aspects of mental life that he chronicles, James is keenly aware of our ability to recall things, repeat actions, and refer to objects with consistency. James takes it to be a fairly natural corollary of the view that thoughts can recur in the mind that thoughts are discrete entities. This would seem to pose a problem for James: it would mean that the stream of thought was a composite entity, composed of discrete thoughts, and the question of what holds those parts together would arise. Again James thinks that this view, also a part of the empiricist legacy (this time the source is Hume), contradicts our experience.

As we have seen earlier, James takes a Darwinian idea, namely, that every action by an organism in its environment is in fact an interaction, changing both organism and environment, and extends it into introspective psychology. Every act of cognition changes its intended object: *e.g.*, "As a snowflake caught in the warm hand is no longer a flake but a drop, so, instead of catching the feeling of relation moving to its

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[65] Most people, upon learning the famous 'a man cannot step into the same river twice,' tend to focus solely on the change in the river, not the traveller who is assumed to step twice as one and the same person. The Latin motto 'Omnia mutantur et nos mutamur in illus' would therefore be a useful codicil to any reiteration of Heraclitus's aphorism.

term, we find we have caught some substantive thing....The attempt at introspective analysis in these cases is in fact like seizing a spinning top to catch its motion, or trying to turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks." (237[66]) Getting hold of the transitive parts of the stream of thought via introspection looks unlikely.

Phenomenal Continuity (pp. 231-239)

This is the section where James attempts to replace talk of a chain of discrete ideas with his notion of a 'stream' of thought. His description of mental life must reconcile felt continuity with phenomena that appear discrete or discontinuous in a way that is 'faithful to the facts' of ordinary experience and physiology. The importance of this effort cannot be overemphasized: it will serve as the prototype for James's later pluralistic view of the universe, and his effort to re-cast empiricism as a philosophy that attends to the real, experienced relations between things also presupposes a view of the universe as continuous. James's treatment of continuity is more limited and expressly subjective here, but if the idea can take root, it will provide support for his later views, which were in large part a response to the discontinuities inherent in traditional dualisms.

The first obstacle to asserting that mental life is continuous would be the commonplace observation that in our lives all kinds of gaps or interruptions in consciousness occur. Sleep, concussion, anaesthesia and hypnotism can each give rise to breaks in the flow of consciousness. Furthermore, sudden events such as a thunderclap can 'derail' our train of thought, providing an example of a break in the continuity of thinking that seems to belie James's assertion. James simply argues that in the latter case, the breaks are not absolute, while in the case of lapses in consciousness there is a lack of awareness of the gap itself that lends a sense of continuity to the thoughts that precede and succeed that breach (hence my use of the phrase 'phenomenal' continuity.) After sleep or anaesthesia, the mind feels connected with past conscious states rather naturally, for "if the consciousness is not aware of [the time-gaps], it cannot feel them as interruptions." (231) James claims this bridging of temporal gaps in consciousness is a production of the mind, similar to the production of an unbroken visual field 'over top of' the retinal blind-spot, which is also unperceived. "Such consciousness as this, whatever it be for the onlooking psychologist, is for itself unbroken. It *feels* unbroken." This is the kind of time labelled 'phenomenal time' in metaphysics; for James, it is the source of our ideas of non-phenomenal, or physical, time.

It is in this section that James coins the term 'stream of thought' (233), to better characterize what earlier empirical psychologists had called the train of thoughts. Regarding qualitative gaps in mental life, such as the perception of a thunderclap, James thinks his view can accommodate such discontinuity. The objects of

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[66] See H. McLaughlin, *The Ends of Our Exploring* (Toronto: Malcom Lester Book, 1999), for a contemporary account of the impact of this ecological line of thinking on the world of ideas.

thought, he argues, do indeed come to us as discrete things, but our awareness of them is not broken by radical changes of our state of awareness. "A silence may be broken by a thunder-clap," he writes,

> "and we may be so stunned and confused for a moment by the shock as to give no instant account to ourselves of what has happened. But that very confusion is a mental state, and a state that passes us straight over from the silence to the sound. The transition between the thought of one object and the thought of another is no more a break in the *thought* than a joint in a bamboo is a break in the wood. It is a part of the *consciousness* as much as the joint is a part of the *bamboo*." (233-4)

Notice here that James is using the very approach he will explain in DCE. He immediately criticizes what he calls the "superficial introspective view" that the discontinuity between silence and sound is absolute, and he points to "the large amount of affinity that may still remain between the thoughts by whose means they [the silence and the sound] are cognized." (234) Though he does not give a detailed account of what these feelings of affinity might be, he mentions bodily position[67], and the overall condition of the cognitive agent as among those things on the periphery of awareness, we could also add some perceptions (other than the auditory, in this case) which, while not central to conscious awareness would nonetheless convey a sense of continuity from the moment before being startled by the thunder to the adrenaline rush immediately succeeding it. However, James does later make an aside (244-5) to remark upon how our training in a language creates sharp affinities among signs, and this predisposes us to very determinate expectations when reading or listening to speech. Affinity, as well as the feeling of succession, between old and new thoughts are often overlooked, claims James, and this is the source of the traditional empiricist view of the mind as encountering discrete objects needing some kind of unification or connection.

James relies on a family of concepts to flesh out his idea of continuity, especially the notions of affinity, proximity, and succession.[68] Indeed, in a later chapter, the activity of conceiving (which James says is based on the 'sense of sameness') will itself be among the contributors (chapter XII). Among these contributors, memory, with its felt warmth and intimacy, also plays an important role. James notes the

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[67] James frequently pointed out the role kinaesthetic sensations play in life, giving every sensory experience an additional sensation relating to the disposition of one's body. James had the advantage of physiological knowledge (he knew that the nervous system contained proprioceptive nerves as well as sensory and motor nerves) that earlier empiricists lacked, but his criticism of their views was time and again philosophical. He felt it was a mistake to view a knowing subject as a mere spectator, passively receiving data from the senses. This gives the claim that feelings of warmth and intimacy bind our experience together a bit more plausibility. If continuous kinaesthetic sensations accompany a sensory 'manifold', perhaps the memories and awareness of our bodily states provides the unifying background we need. "We think; and as we think we feel our bodily selves as the seat of the thinking. If the thinking be *our* thinking, it must be suffused through all its parts with that peculiar warmth and intimacy that make it come as ours." (235) James concludes on an interesting note, intimating that those feelings may be nothing more than the feeling of "the same old body always there", which points to his next chapter on the self. *Cf.* James on proprioception: pp. 1100*ff*. For a contemporary view on the significance of kinaesthetic sensations, see José Luis Bermúdez, *The Paradox of Self-Consciousness*, (MIT Press, 1998.)

neurology that subserves our introspection: neural impulses are not instantaneous events, nor do they leave the brain unchanged by their occurrence. They have an 'inertia' which affects the overall state of the brain. The dying echos of past neural impulses are not only causes of the present impulse: they are constituents of that event.[69] Though James does not use the analogy, we might consider the cerebral impulses as akin to ripples on the surface of a pond. The fading undulations of previous waves will give shape to the surface at the present moment. And as James quipped, "As the total neurosis changes, so does the total psychosis change." (236) ('Neurosis' and 'psychosis' were James's technical terms for brain-state and mind-state, respectively.) If neural events are never completely discontinuous, and have varying durations "so must the successive psychoses shade gradually into each other, although their *rate* of change may be much faster at one moment than at the next." (*ibid.*) James uses his postulated parallelism between mind and brain to unseat the view that states of mind can be discontinuous and require unifying.

James devotes considerable space in this section to discussing the introspected rate of change of thought. Slow thought seems to have a clarity about it that rapidly succeeding thoughts do not. (This is a point Wittgenstein would later probe.) Rapid thoughts give a sense of transition or relation: they have a feeling of movement associated with them, while slow thoughts are more static and stable. This distinction between 'substantive' and 'transitive' parts of the stream of thought will be of increasing importance for James's psychology as he develops the idea. Characteristically, James finds a striking simile for his idea. "Like a bird's life, [the stream of thought] seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings." (236) (Interestingly, he goes on to note how he sees this psychological fact reflected in the grammar of our language, where sentences do not endlessly flow into one another, but are punctuated.) As for these different parts of the stream, James claims the substantive parts often consist in images of some sort, while the transitive parts are not images, but give a feeling of connection between one substantive thought and another. The flights, or transitive parts of the stream of thought, are for James the great labourers of the mind: they lead us from one substantive thought to another.

This idea is meant to do a lot of psychological work for James. In fact, he will soon modify his picture to include vaguer transitive feelings, what he calls 'feelings of tendency', or 'fringes' of a thought. Transitive thoughts and these less perceptible cousins are both difficult to isolate introspectively (James will give reasons for this), and they do much of the work of mental life. Fringes in particular will be used to explain

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[68] Later, in his more metaphysical writings, contiguity will frequently augment talk of continuity. James thought this would rescue his theory of pure experience from idealism and solipsism. See "The Many and the One", MEN, p. 32, 48.

[69] This idea of past neural events resonating and conditioning present neuronal activity is with us today. Gerald Edelman (for one, the Churchlands' model is worth noting as well) emphasizes the fluidity of this re-processing older perceptual stimuli as a key step in the emergence of consciousness. Edelman acknowledges a debt by calling his notion of temporal succession the "Jamsian flow" of consciousness, the latter Edelman euphemistically calls 'the remembered present.' See his *The Remembered Present: A Biological Theory of Consciousness*, p. 248.

how signs have meanings and how meanings inhabit the mind. Before examining fringes, some consideration of James's many comments on language in this section is needed.

Interspersed with his developing picture of thoughts are a great many remarks about language and its effect on introspective psychology. Just as attention and memory are highly selective functions of the mind, screening out or ignoring many experiences or aspects thereof, language serves our practical needs, which are seldom psychological in nature.[70] This idea of the inadequacy of language underwrites James's criticisms of rationalists and empiricists ('spiritualists' and 'associationists', respectively, in his terminology.) It is also an idea that will come under close scrutiny in Wittgenstein's mature work.

In his discussion of the "large amount of affinity" that exists between otherwise distinct thoughts, James criticizes our tendency to name thoughts in virtue of their objects or centres. This is hardly a remarkable habit on our part, but it causes problems for the psychologist. The practical demands of naming pull our attention in a specific direction, causing James to remark that language "works against our perception of the truth." He explains:

> We name our thoughts simply, each after its thing, as if each knew its own thing and nothing else. What each really knows is clearly the thing it is named for, with dimly perhaps a thousand other things. It ought to be named after all of them, but it never is. (234)

This is not noteworthy simply for the mention of language (for a great many late nineteenth-century philosophers were fascinated with language (*e.g.*, Pierce, Husserl, Nietzsche, Mauthner)), but for the direction of James's line of thought. His criticism is directed at what we might call habits or traditions of naming. Our habits are practically inclined to link a name with the most central or vivid part of the stream of thought, the substantive part, the part that forms the mind's 'perching place'. However, according to James, it is the fleeting, transitive parts surrounding that perch that does the work of interest to psychology. We shall see that this is a crucial part of James's overall philosophical picture, and it is not without its difficulties. First and foremost among these will be the problems it presents for James's empiricism: his strong commitment to resolving difficulties without reference to hidden entities or processes will conflict with this view that the majority of the workload of mental life is borne by the countless inhabitants of this 'dim periphery' of the mental stream.

Criticisms of language emerge at several crucial locations in the *Principles*. (Noteworthy among these are James's comments about grammar in the passages immediately preceding "The Stream of Thought".) James's efforts toward forging a philosophical solution to questions about how thoughts relate to one

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[70] We must be careful to attend to James's intentions as he changes focus from moment to moment. In "The Stream of Thought" James will consider language as a phenomenon for the psychologist's study,

another (including how they cause their successors) are premised on this critique of language: on this view, we have not yet seen a naturalistic solution to the problem of 'what the mind is' because of the distortions of language. Hence his frequent exchanging of 'feeling' for 'thought': two words that tend to artificially divide the stream of mental life (into the affective and intellectual, respectively (see p. 218.)) The pull of naming towards the more substantive parts of the stream of thought is James's linguistic/psychological explanation for this philosophical quandary. This is where traditional psychological theories run aground, according to James. Empirical theories (*i.e.*, classical associationism in the manner of Hume) tend to postulate a kind of atomism regarding thoughts, while 'intellectualists' likewise deny the feelings of relation connecting a thought with its successor and assign the task of connecting thoughts to something outside the affective realm of the mind. (The relations are rational, and apprehended by something not linked to sensation: our faculty of reason.) James, on the other hand, locates the relations which do the necessary work in the affective nature of the knower *in situ*, the more abstract instances of relating being distant relatives of a learned response to a sensory cue. He is characteristically neutral on the metaphysical ramifications of this 'emotive' theory. Relations exist, and are felt to exist, but depending on the course of subsequent reflection, those relations may appear to be 'of' the object being thought about, or part of the 'inward coloring' of the stream of consciousness.[71]

This section of the chapter can free James from criticisms that he was too quick to rely on introspection. James was quite clear about ramifications of the difficulties inherent in attempting to introspect the transitive[72] parts of thought. Introspection is essentially a *post hoc* affair, as James characterizes it. He is quick to remind us that what the psychologist observes in a subject's behaviour may not be available to that person's introspection, simply because memory does not preserve every aspect of every moment of life. In pathological cases, such as amnesia or hysterical blindness, the schism between inner and outer manifestation of psychological phenomena can be extreme. In the case of the introspection of transitive aspects of a thought, the problem likewise is acute: "The attempt at introspective analysis in these cases" writes James of transitive thoughts, "is in fact like seizing a spinning top to catch its motion, or trying to turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks." (237)

James seems to be well aware of the problem facing psychology.[73] If, from failure to clearly apprehend transitive aspects of the stream of thought, we move to denial of their existence, we create philosophical

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and—more philosophically—as an obstacle or recalcitrant tool with which the psychologist must wrestle in the course of his or her work.

[71] For an overview of James's theory of relations, see Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Chaos and Context: A Study in William James* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1978).

[72] This term was insisted upon by James, in the face of criticisms by Peirce, who in a series of letters chastized James for a potential conflation of grammatical and psychological terms. (Peirce suggested 'transient' as a replacement) See *The Letters of William James*, volume 7, pp. 481*ff.*, for Peirce's letter and James's response.

[73] At the very location cited, he remarks "The results of this introspective difficulty are baleful."

difficulties. If a feeling is of a transition from one thought to another, 'concluding' thought, our attention moves naturally to that conclusion, and any arresting of the transition is an alteration or abortion of the entire process. So it is tempting to leave such transitions out of an introspective report. This leads to two extreme philosophical positions that create metaphysical problems. Sensationalists deny relations *ex mens* as well as *in mens* (*e.g.*, Hume), while intellectualists preserve outer relations, describing inner transitions by means of idealized (and unfelt) operations such as Thought, Intellect or Reason (the idea of unconscious inference or computation is an example of this). James thinks these two ways both fail to capture mental life as it is sensibly experienced, and his is a 'third way' designed to overcome the flaws of preceding philosophies.

This is where James's 'theory of felt relations' begins. Throughout his career, James relied on relations to explain various metaphysical, epistemological and psychological phenomena, and in the *Principles*, his concerns reflected this breadth of curiosity. The question was not only how the mind relates, but how mental relations map relations in the external world. Interestingly, James points to how the relations in the world are reflected in the grammar of natural languages. Here we see James stressing the nuance of natural languages: they give colour to many different relations we detect in the world. In a style evincing his mature philosophical position, James stresses the varying aspects of the relations adumbrated in our speech:

> If we speak objectively, it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that matches each one of them by an inward colouring of its own. In either case the relations are numberless, and no existing language is capable of doing justice to all their shades. (238)

The next passage is one of the most frequently-cited passages in Wittgenstein's writings, appearing in six different volumes of the published *Nachlaß* as well as the *Investigations*.[74] It is where James postulates that non-substantive words have their own, hitherto unnamed, felt relations:

> We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*. Yet we do not: so inveterate has our habit become of recognizing the existence of the substantive parts alone, that language almost refuses to lend itself to any other use. The Empiricists have always dwelt on its influence in making us suppose that where we have a separate name, a separate thing must needs be there to correspond with it; and they have rightly denied the existence of the mob of abstract entities, principles, and forces, in whose favor no other evidence that this could be brought up. But they have said nothing of that obverse error,...of supposing that where there is *no* name no entity can exist. All *dumb* or anonymous psychic states have, owing to this error, been cooly suppressed; or, if recognized at all, have been named after the substantive perception they led to, as thoughts 'about' this object or 'about' that, the stolid word *about* engulfing all their

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[74] It appears in both volumes of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, *Zettel*, *Philosophical Occasions*, the *Brown Book*, and *Last Writings on Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 1. It also surfaces in his recorded lectures. It appears in part 2 of *Investigations*, section vi, p. 181-3 minus James's name. (See chapter three, below.)

> delicate idiosyncrasies in its monotonous sound. Thus the greater and greater accentuation and isolation of the substantive parts have continually gone on. (238-9)

This is part of James's general criticism of previous empiricists. The habit of directing attention to substantive parts of the stream of thought (which are reflected in language by substantive terms[75]) diverts the psychologist from those aspects of the stream which actually do the work of relating one idea to the next. This criticism of what might be called the naïve introspection of empiricists is based on an appeal to physiology. The brain is so complex, its total changes so diverse and continuous, that consciousness must be thought of as an unbroken, continuous entity, like a stream. Furthermore, one must not assume that the neural events that constitute the transitive moments in conscious life are central to our awareness. Nor are they beyond that awareness altogether: James thinks they are dimly felt, but the nature of both attention and language conceal this.

"Feelings of Tendency" and fringes (pp 240-262)

Before moving on to intentionality, James makes a lengthy digression in order to discuss how experiential continuity (or continuity in the stream of thought) affects phenomena like meaningful speech. This is where he introduces the metaphor of the 'fringe' of a thought, which will recur in later sections of the *Principles*, as well as in Wittgenstein's writings pertaining to James.

James considers experiences of expecting caused by various expressions. He notes that commands like 'wait', 'listen' and 'look' arouse different states of attention, though there is no clear object of attention present. Likewise, the phenomenon of searching for a forgotten name is accompanied by different feelings depending on whose name is being sought. This seems puzzling. How can two states of mind differ when they manifestly lack an object? James's conclusion appears to be one familiar to associationists: connections with what we can remember, sense, etc., lead us to what we seek.[76] The rhythm of a missing phrase may be present to mind, or we may have a connotation or relevant fact that will lead us to our goal. But what is unusual about James's account is that he gives those tendencies that guide a subject to his or her goal a phenomenal reality lacking from a traditional associationist account. Using his earlier hydraulic metaphor, his claim is that the relating of substantive parts of the stream of thought is not accomplished in virtue of any features of those images or words, which are mere psychic resting-places. Rather, it is the surrounding water which pushes thought to its destination:

> The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartpotsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that

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[75] Interestingly, Wittgenstein's sole mention of nominalists in *Investigations* is in a remark criticizing them for the same error. See §383.

[76] The problem is also familiar for readers of Frege, who addressed the problem of how we can comprehend sentences that appear to lack an object.

> psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed[77] in the free water that flows around it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. The significance, the value, of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it,—or rather that is fused into one with it and has become bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh; leaving it, it is true, an image of the same *thing* it was before, but making it an image of that thing newly taken and freshly understood. (246)

This metaphorical account of thought-images and feelings of tendency caught Wittgenstein's attention, and was the subject of further exploration on his part.[78] Andrew Bailey has pointed out that this metaphor of the stream of thought is often accentuated at the expense of James's other metaphors of birdflight and bamboo (quoted above at 55*ff.*), but hopefully James's point here does not lead one to the conclusion that James took the objects of thought to be unreal or lacking stability.[79] As he asserted the reality of extramental relations to give his later metaphysics a needed continuity, here he points to feelings of tendency as important participants in the economy of the mind. They form a shadowy, subjective context within which images or words take on a more specific character. They constitute our intentions. Thus James explains malapropism as a premature discharge of a tendency to utter a word or phrase. This is still a common explanation in psychology: fumblings and errors are attributed to premature discharges of learned motor programmes.

In addition to feelings of tendency, James discusses even more dimly felt relations which he called 'fringes'. By this term he meant the felt influence of minor brain-processes, which lead the cognitive agent to new objects related to what is present to mind. James likens these fringes to overtones in heard music, colouring what is central to awareness and shaping one's expectations and recollections. As feelings of tendency are connected with the phenomenally subjective part of the stream of thought, fringes are dim relations pertaining to the objective side of the stream. In retrospect, we can discern in these *obiter dicta* the emergence of James's metaphysics of pure experience, particularly his postulate that relations between things are real and knowable. It is interesting to note as well how the presence or absence of these vaguely felt relations colour the resulting conscious states.[80] More significant for our ultimate purposes are the examples James goes on to use to clarify his notion of the 'fringe' of an object of thought.[81]

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[77] This metaphor may have come from Marcus Aurelius, who expressed a view of *askesis* similar to James's. "Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of the mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts." (George Long, trans.) *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*, Book V, 16. The similarity between James and Wittgenstein regarding their practice of philosophy as a spiritual exercise in the manner of the Stoics will not be considered here.

[78] Not least for James's stated intent to effect "the re-instatement of the vague into its proper place in our mental life" (246) and his claim that we can think without clear definitions of our words. (*ibid.*)

[79] See Andrew Bailey, "Beyond the Fringe: William James and Transitional Parts of the Stream of Consciousness" *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6(2-3), (1999), pp. 141-154.

[80] "When very fresh, our minds carry an immense horizon with them. The present image shoots its perspective far before it, irradiating in advance the regions in which lie the thoughts as yet unborn. Under ordinary conditions the halo of felt relations is much more circumscribed…At certain moments he may find himself doubting whether his thoughts have not come to a full stop; but the vague sense of a *plus ultra* makes him ever struggle on towards a more definite expression of what it may be…" (247) . The

It is amazing how many of the topics James considers reappear in Wittgenstein's work with little or no indication of their origin. In the pages concluding this section of James's chapter, he discusses a variety of phenomena: the feeling of searching for a thought, the relation of heterogeneous expressions of a thought (words versus pictures, *e.g.*,) to their object, the sense of continuity we get from a familiar language constructed grammatically, and the ways in which grammar and syntax contribute to the appearance of nonsense. Expecting, intending, and comprehending and producing meaningful speech are all touched on briefly by James, as examples of activities at least partially demystified by his notion of associative fringes. Two points stand out from his summary of these examples. The first is one of his more explicit remarks on grammar and meaning: "certain kinds of verbal associate, certain grammatical expectations fulfilled, stand for a good part of our impression that a sentence has a meaning and is dominated by the Unity of one Thought. Nonsense in grammatical form sounds half rational; sense with grammatical sequence upset sounds nonsensical" (255) In addition to this, James reminds us that words have meaning in their sentential settings (thus echoing Frege and Peirce), and that their 'dynamic meaning' may simply consist in this feeling of correctness or familiarity.[82] Taken statically, words have richer connotations, but this seems in James's eyes to be a function of the altered attention of the word user. A word under conscious examination is a different thing than a word 'on the wing.'

James deftly connects this perceptual theory to his earlier remarks on epistemology (216). He distinguishes 'knowledge about' as awareness of the relations an object possesses. One possible example of this, given the preceding discussion by James, is the ability to use language: if I know what a sign means, I know its application or possibilities of combination. This is distinct from acquaintance, which is bare awareness of the substantive part. Fringes of many sorts surround the word 'charity', but not 'keyf'[83]. I can hear, utter or imagine the word 'keyf', but I do not know its fringes[84]; this opens up the following possibility: I can test my knowledge of an object of acquaintance by attending to a fringe, following its lead. The point extends beyond our use of words. If I feel so-and-so is a good person, that feeling can lead me to inquire,

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paragraphs that follow explore this phenomena in relation to speech. Indeed, this looks like a point about grammar—the 'given' of our training, and our ability to exert ourselves mentally set broad limits, but within those we struggle to express things.

[81] This gets confused early on, for James regrettably mixes talk of physical objects with the 'topic' of thought, which seems to include concepts, images, etc. See 250*ff*.

[82] James does seem to imply identity here, probably due to his comment at 250 of the meaning of a thought being its conclusion. (This is, I believe, a hasty pragmatic slogan.) The connections between meaning and intending are intimate, to be sure, but I think James did not mean to identify the two. But the basic point seems to be that our grammatical habits (in the form of felt tendencies) lead us to speak the way we do, and insofar as we ponder using a specific locution, the fringe associated with it is what makes it feel appropriate or inappropriate.

[83] Arabic for 'sense of well-being' (in a religious context only).

[84] This is an oversimplification. The phonic fringes of the phonemes comprising the word are of course available to me (given my familiarity with the sounds 'k' and 'f', *e.g.*,) as are other fringes associated with the roman alphabet. It the word was spelled in Arabic, for example, I would have even less to go on.

to make various tests concerning their character. Acquaintance blossoms into knowledge in the more abstract sense via cognition of increasing numbers (and types) of fringes.

Thus for James affinity plays an crucial role in the course of thought, and thereby in learning. An equivocal term, such as 'man', does not exist without a definite meaning if we have an intention behind the utterance. Even if this intention is invisible to our interlocutors, it gives the word as we perceive it a definite semantic aspect, much as we see visual scenes under an aspect or interpretation. Tendencies we feel at a given moment, aspects we see, our mood or an object's fringes shape which things are felt to have affinity with present thought, and those things which may enter the field of consciousness 'illegitimately' and are to be ignored. This is an evolutionary account of the phenomena of thinking: satisfaction forms a kind of success, dissatisfaction continues the competition, or struggle among thoughts and feelings.

There is a further connection here, and that is with habit, which (though I have not emphasized it thus far) is one of the cornerstones of James's theory of mind. Regarding his discussion of linguistic fringes, James cites George Campbell, (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (1776)) who suggests "by the habitual use of a language (even though it were quite irregular), the signs would insensibly become connected in the imagination, wherever the things signified are connected in nature, so, by the regular structure of a language, this connexion among the signs is conceived as analogous to that which subsisteth among their archetypes." (quoted by James at 252-3) The connection with habit and learning is clarified somewhat in footnote at 255: James there mentions children's learning the grammatical form of a language even in cases where they don't understand all the words in the sentences. While he did not devote much thought to language learning, he notes at this point that some of the formal features of language are absorbed prior to full language competency, and presumably form part of a habitual background for speech. This idea of language involving learned reactions finds fuller expression in Wittgenstein's work (see chapter four, below.)

In a passage that would catch Wittgenstein's attention, James goes so far as to claim that each word has a psychic overtone leading us to a forefelt conclusion.[85] This may be taken either to mean that each word has a wholly unique feeling accompanying it, or that it occupies a definite and felt place within a system (as, indeed, individual overtones do within the system of music.)

The digression concerning meaning and felt relations concludes with mention of the Ballard case (discussed in chapter three, below.) James offers an 'all roads lead to Rome' analogy (*cf.* his diagram at 260) to reinforce his pragmatic analysis of meaning as 'what leads to *this* conclusion'. James allows that many different feelings may lead to practically identical ends, which would allow for differences among subjects with regard to thought, and it would go some way to accounting for the increasing abstractness of

thought in maturity. As persons gain facility in thinking, they abstract away from a concept's sensory relata, and non-sensory feelings carry the thinker from premise to conclusion.[86]

To summarize all that appears in these pages of James's: when speaking of the meanings of words, we must distinguish between the static meaning of the lexicographer, and the dynamic meanings found in speech. The latter are the conclusions or goals of our intentional linguistic activity. Dimly felt fringes give us a mark or criterion of how words are to be used. Insofar as utterances flow with our learned habits of grammar, we speak without much conscious effort and arrive at our desired goal. Malaprops or grammatical fumblings interrupt or delay this nascent thought and our sense of discord directs attention towards correction. As for the meaning of a word, James is careful to distinguish the contexts of mention versus use, to employ a more modern set of terms. When taken statically, we tend to think of the meaning as a picture (mental image), when dynamically, a use. Futhermore, this distinction shows how different people may use different methods of thought to arrive at the same substantive conclusions. As James puts it in his own summary: "if the words 'coffee,' 'bacon,' 'muffins,' and 'eggs' lead a man to speak to his cook, to pay his bills, and to take measures for the morrow's meal as visual and gustatory memories would, why are they not, for all practical intents and purposes, as good a kind of material in which to think?" (256)

Intentionality: (pp. 262-273) Thoughts intend, or point to their objects in some way

In insisting on the cognitive aspect of the stream of thought, James makes some remarkable comments on the nature of thoughts that echo throughout his later philosophy, and hint at developments in the later chapters of *Principles*. James frequently emphasized the extra-mental qualities of thoughts, in part to steer clear of idealism, concerning which he felt a very visceral aversion.

Regarding the familiar, extra-mental objects of thought, James's first comment is to note that we distinguish these from 'inner' objects (hallucinations, *e.g.*,) by corroboration with our peers. The notion that real beings are distinguished from illusions by corroborating experiences (including the intersubjective experience just noted) will be a prominent feature in James's mature version of phenomenalism, in effect using a pragmatic criterion to restore the familiar distinction between appearance and reality.

James also give a brief ontogenesis of sensations in this passage. A new sensation (the example he gives is heartburn) first appears to the knower as without connection to either an outer world or an inner collection of merely subjective, mental events. Sensations are at first "simple beings, neither in nor out of thought"

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[85] *Investigations*, p. 183. See chapter three, below.

[86] James cites G. H. Lewes in order to stress a point familiar to teachers of philosophy: in order to get students to learn the habits of logic, we subject them to repeated instances of symbols, bereft of any native connotations, in order to direct attention towards the purely formal operations we require of them. After a certain point in one's education, 'two cats plus three dogs equals five animals' is less clear than 2 + 3 = 5.

(263). James expands upon this claim in subsequent chapters, but here his point is simply that by perceiving a sensation to resemble others, we connect it up with them, forming a world.[87] James points out that the kind of 'higher-order' Consciousness that we possess, enabling us to distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar, subjective and objective is not primitive, and thus a poor assumption for a necessary feature of cognition. As James explores the issue, the temptation to distinguish veridical from illusory objects of cognition is really the temptation to import a psychologist's point of view into that of the knowing subject under consideration. In his account:

> A mind which has become conscious of its own cognitive function, plays what we have called 'the psychologist' upon itself. It not only knows the things that appear before it; it knows that it knows them. This stage of reflective condition is, more or less explicitly, our habitual adult state of mind. (263)

From here James moves on to consider one more issue that would loom large in the future history of philosophy. Taking an interesting example, James explores the nature of a thought through an analogy with a sentence (though here the relation is not sufficiently clear to deem it simply an analogy.) James makes a final plea (in this chapter) for the notion that a state of consciousness is a unified event or field. The object of the thought 'the pack of cards is on the table', he argues, is the situation pictured by the sentence, and not its component parts (*i.e.*, 'pack', 'cards' 'being on the table'). However the uttering of this sentence may manifest itself neurologically (and James points out the corresponding psychic 'feel' may vary over the duration of the event), the object of the state of mind remains the same. James denies that the temporal parts of the thinking of a thought serve as divisions within that object. This is an account of thoughts strikingly similar to that within the Frege-Russell tradition. We might go so far as to say that in making these points about the objectivity of thoughts (this is meant in the Scholastic, rather than the contemporary sense) James is claiming that a thought is about a state of affairs, not the objects that comprise that situation-complex.

While James acknowledges that a single state of consciousness can have a complex object, he denies that meaning shifts as our attention does during the occurrence of that thought. "*Whatever things are thought in relation are thought from the outset in a unity, in a single pulse of subjectivity, a single psychosis, feeling, or state of mind.*" (268) James accounts for this difference between the 'words going through our mind' changing and the thought's object remaining the same by pointing to psychic overtones, or fringes. These he claim, are present throughout the event, and given their guiding tendencies, they are the feelings that connect these words into a meaningful picture of a situation, be it 'I have heartburn', or 'the pack of cards is on the table.'

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[87] To be precise, it is not only comparison at work here, but discrimination. As a physical world emerges, so does the mental world of our errors and illusions.

James's account of a thought is in accord with the so-called picture theory of meaning of the *Tractatus*, where a single situation or state of affairs is the object of the thought (what that thought is about) while that same situation may have component parts (cards, tables). James of course differs from Wittgenstein here in explicitly integrating this picture of a thought with psychology, *viz*., a picture of the dynamic neural functions thought to underlie the experience of 'having a thought'. James either mistakenly believes there is an order of neural events correlated to the individual words of an English sentence expressing this thought, or his diagram[88] misleadingly portrays such a relation.

Selectivity (pp. 273-278)

Though James will devote entire chapters to attention, volition and the functions of discrimination and comparison, his remarks in this chapter on the selective aspect of the stream of thought form a useful summary. It is difficult to overestimate the impact of these faculties on James's overall view of the mind, however, his remarks at this point are rather simple.

James discusses how the stream of thought is not only shaped by attention, but by our physiology. Sense organs have discriminative limitations, and our processing of sensory information likewise leaves out much of what is going on in the world. As James notes, it is unlikely that the breach between violet and ultraviolet light (which for us marks one boundary of the visible spectrum) constitutes an important gap in nature. Apart from the selectivity of the sense organs, much of what enters our field of consciousness fails to interest us, and falls to the periphery of awareness. Subjective interest, shaped by both phylogenetic (evolution) and ontogenetic (learning) experience, leaves us with a truncated field of present experience, and slants the field towards objects of previous or current interest to the cognitive agent. James along the way notes that the mind is also a relentless organizer and categorizer, grouping sensations into useable collections. He gives as examples the experience of hearing a ticking clock, and the perception of dots on a page as grouped by rows or groups (273). One could see in this work a prelude to the Gestalt movement in psychology, though it should be emphasized again that James's comments here are rather brief. This is noteworthy as some Wittgenstein scholars (*e.g*., Joachim Schulte) argue against the Wittgenstein-James connection on the ground that Wittgenstein was more sympathetic to Gestalt theory than to James's psychology.[89]

Taking perceptual selectivity as given, James paints a picture of how intentional selectivity works, implying his own metaphysical views in the process. He cites Helmholtz approvingly, where the latter describes the many optical phenomena we normally screen out: the familiar example of the blind spot is

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[88] See *Principles*, 269: his stated point with that diagram was to show there is no relation between components of a thought (*e.g*., the concept 'a pack') and a discrete neural event. No parts of the thought *qua* mental event correspond to the objects portrayed in the state of affairs.

augmented with mention of after-images, chromatic fringes and other optical 'errata'. Helmholtz goes on to argue that out of this pool of raw sensation, our attention settles on real objects, or things. James counters by asking "But what are things? Nothing…but special groups of sensible qualities, which happen practically or aesthetically to interest us, to which we therefore give substantive names, and which we exalt to this exclusive status of independence and dignity." (274)

We do more than simply select the 'natural kinds' from the buzz of sensory input we receive, James goes on to suggest that our image of a physical object, like a table-top, is built from a paradigmatic visual experience, selected from other 'perspectival' images. The view from which the table appears perfectly square is considered by us to be "the 'true' form of the table, and [I] erect the attribute squareness into the table's essence, for aesthetic reasons of my own." (James's citing personal aesthetic reasons as the dominant force here is idiosyncratic. His own theory would suggest it is too deeply engrained and commonplace an experience to be solely a matter of volition.)

This chapter is, perhaps more than any other in the *Principles*, a mixture of psychological findings and philosophical convictions, with William James's own *Weltanschauung* staining and dying the theory of mind offered therein, which is the substantive topic of exposition. While there are aspects of his radical empiricism here, most notably elements of pragmatism, phenomenalism and a nominalist theory of language origin, other parts of the picture remain to be developed. These emerge in the next chapter, in James's analysis of personal identity and the concept of the self.

Chapter X: Self-Consciousness

James identified "The Stream of Thought" as a sketch[90], an entrance point to the more detailed view of mental life that he wished to give in "The Consciousness of Self", the chapter that immediately followed. The two are accordingly often read as a unit, although I would argue that the entire *Principles* is the minimum unit for comprehension of James's view of the mind. In any case, a look at how this chapter builds on "The Stream of Thought" is a good idea. Despite the advertisement of this as the more detailed chapter, it is in fact simply an application of the earlier views to a narrower domain, and thus our treatment need not be extremely long.

Instead of looking at thought in the general sense, this chapter explicitly examines awareness of one's self, or what is typically called 'self-consciousness' or 'self-awareness.' As the latter has fewer normative connotations, I will use it to describe James's subject matter. Here we can see his empirical approach unfold, as he announces he will begin by examining what the self present to the senses (hereafter: the

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[89] See *Experience and Expression: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993).
[90] He does this at 220 and again at 278.

empirical self, following James) is like, before considering postulated entities like a transcendental or pure ego. "The Empirical Self", of any individual is, according to James "all that he is tempted to call by the name of *me*." (279) It is important to notice the connection with naming here, as James's basic approach is to probe the nature of self-awareness through examination of our normal ways of talking about it. His empiricism here is linguistic, and one might even say, democratic or populist. Linguistic practices involving 'me,' and 'mine,' *etc*., are indicative (for James) of feelings of attachment to objects perceived in the stream of thought. The line between what I am and what I possess (what is 'me' and what is 'mine') is not clear, and thus James is forced to consider these two in combination. "We feel and act about certain things that are ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves. Our fame, our children, the work of our hands, may be as dear to us as our bodies are, and arouse the same feelings and the same acts of reprisal if attacked." (279) His empirical analysis quickly uncovers confusions that invite philosophical treatment: "And our bodies themselves, are they simply ours, or are they *us*?" James's consideration of feelings of attachment will provide both an explanation of this phenomenon, and a way out of the conundrum.

James divides his investigation into three related tasks: first he will examine the constituents of this occasional object of consciousness, the 'self'; this will be followed by two different relations, the feelings aroused by a sense of self, and the actions which are spawned by consciousness of one's self. This is typical of James: if self-awareness is a widespread phenomenon, it must have some role in the overall environmental fitness of the organism, furthermore, to prompt us to action, it must be connected with the rest of our cerebral/mental life, in order to motivate us to act. The feelings accompanying the self are what tie it to the rest of our habits and patterns of action, and the actions are what give the self a use in life.

As for the constitution of the self, James distinguishes between various layers of the empirical self and considers these in turn. Thereupon, he turns to the 'pure ego' of philosophy, which he will explain away as a postulation of philosophers, rather than something discovered in psychology. The constituents of the empirical self are the material self, the social self and the spiritual self. (280) It is interesting to consider the mixture of evolutionary, physiological, social, and psychological dimensions to these layers of self.

The material self, as described by James, is that sense of self that derives from the control or possession of physical objects, most notably the body. He identifies, along with the body, our families and even our clothes and domicile are part of this material self. To each of these things we feel varying degrees of attachment, often quite intense, and the causes of this attachment are mixed. "All these different things", James writes, "are the objects of instinctive preferences coupled with the most important practical interests of life." (280) The mixture of instinctive preference and practical interest should be noted here, as well as the fact that physical objects seem to be the predominate objects of attachment.

The social self is attached to things far less tangible than the objects of the material self. Here recognition by others, esteem, and honour play a dominant role, and though his treatment is brief, James does not downplay the contribution of this sense of self to the overall mental health of the individual. He also notes the flexible and plural nature of social recognition: "Properly speaking, *a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him* and carry an image of him in their mind." (281-2) This seems to leave an individual with an extraordinary number of selves to manage. Are we to infer from James's quote that we consciously attend to these many different people who hold opinions about us? Not at all, says James. We simplify, taking people as representative (and jointly constitutive) of "distinct *groups* of persons about whose opinion" we care.[91] This self is like the material self in that its objects are public, not 'inner' or private.

The spiritual self is still less concrete, though it is still tied to something phenomenally present to the stream of thought. It is all that is not external, either in the sense of what is bodily or what is social. It is the collection of private phenomena that constitutes one's spiritual self. It is the self that seems most stable and real, typically, as James notes in introducing the subject:

> "These psychic dispositions are the most enduring and intimate part of the self, that which we most verily seem to be. We take a purer self-satisfaction when we think of our ability to argue and discriminate, of our moral sensibility and conscience, of our indomitable will, than when we survey any of our other possessions. Only when these are altered is a man said to be *alienatus a se*." (283)

James suggests the stream of thought is the raw material for the construction of a spiritual self, though how such a self gets built takes more than one form. We may take our thought abstractly, as the powers or faculties we possess, and call these 'mine' (separately) and 'me' (collectively.) But James, as one would expect, is not satisfied with this approach (this would be a personal difference for him; he nonetheless acknowledges the existence of the process as such.) The alternative James describes as taking "a concrete view", where, "the spiritual self in us will be either the entire stream of our personal consciousness, or the present 'segment' or 'section' of that stream, according as we take a broader or a narrower view—both the stream and the section being concrete existences in time, and each being a unity after its own peculiar kind." (284) Thus we choose between an abstract spiritual self, as a collection of faculties, or two more concrete approaches, one identifying with the stream of thought in its entirety, the other with some portion of this (what portion that might be, James does not say, but he later hints it might be those thoughts we take to be 'rational' or having some other value we (literally!) identify with.) The completion of this idea about social selves is worth quoting, both for its foreshadowing of the views expressed in 'Does "Consciousness"

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[91] At least one James scholar sees this as the road to disaster: as noted earlier, Richard Gale has recently put forward an argument claiming James suffered from a 'divided self' that renders his philosophical position untenable. James in this chapter goes on to talk of the possibility of such multiple social selves as being either 'discordant' (*i.e.*, neurotic, incapacitating) or 'a perfectly harmonious division of labor' (282) and not therefore unhealthy. See Gale, *op. cit.*

Exist?' and the reliance on some yet undeveloped components of James's psychology. Regarding the building of a spiritual self, he writes: "[W]hether we take [the stream of thought] abstractly or concretely, our considering the spiritual self at all is a reflective process, is the result of our abandoning the outward-looking point of view, and of our having become able to think of subjectivity as such, *to think ourselves as thinkers.*" (284) It is discrimination, the subject of a later chapter (chapter 13), that does the necessary work here, in conjunction with comparison and selective attention. The psychological accretion[92] of a sense of self out of the stream of thought occurs through noticing differences:

> This attention to thought as such, and the identification of ourselves with it rather than with any of the objects which it reveals, is a momentous and in some respects a rather mysterious operation, of which we need here only say that as a matter of fact it exists; and that in everyone, at an early age, the distinction between thought as such, and what it is 'of' or 'about,' has become familiar to the mind. The deeper grounds for this discrimination may possibly be hard to find; but superficial grounds are plenty and near at hand. Almost anyone will tell us that thought is a different sort of existence from things, because many sorts of thought are of no things—e.g., pleasures, pains, and emotions; others are of non-existent things—errors and fictions; others again of existent things, but in a form that is symbolic and does not resemble them—abstract ideas and concepts; whilst in the thoughts that do resemble the things they are 'of' (percepts, sensations), we can feel, alongside of the thing known, the thought of it going on as an altogether separate act and operation of the mind. (284)

Of note for our purposes are the variety of mental 'objects' considered by James: pains, emotions, non-existent objects, concepts—all of these are examples that would preoccupy Wittgenstein's later thoughts on philosophical psychology. (He would, as I will later argue, reject James's supposition that there are 'deeper grounds' waiting to be plumbed). James's radical empiricism (and in the subtext, his metaphysics of pure experience) is at work in this chapter.[93] He is driven to the 'concrete' option of taking the stream in its entirety as the source of the self, and then distinguishing between the objective and subjective parts of that stream to arrive at the second of his concrete appropriations, isolating those active elements of the stream of thought as those that are most frequently identified with the self in our tradition of psychology. (To speak of a tradition of psychology in 1890 may seem odd from the contemporary perspective, but James is here trying to relate what most people single out within their thoughts as 'themselves', grounding his account not in the opinions of his colleagues but popular opinion. As for James's perspective, his text shows a keen awareness of the history of research on this and other topics, as is seen in his frequent use of James Mill, not to mention John Locke and David Hume.)

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[92] Accretion is a notion that will figure in the later writings on radical empiricism: the universe 'hangs together' because it is temporally and spatially continuous, not because it is a manifold of discrete appearances requiring connection from without. This point is best made in "A World of Pure Experience": "The universe continually grows in quantity by new experiences that graft themselves upon the older mass; but these very new experiences often help the mass to a more consolidated form." (ERE 43. *Cf. Principles*, 323)

[93] This is not universally accepted among James scholars, but one may look to Lamberth, Kappy Suckiel, Haddock Seigfried, McDermott, Wild and Cooper for support on this issue.

This is the 'self of selves', or what James also calls the 'sanctuary within the citadel': "It is what welcomes or rejects....It is the home of interest,—not the pleasant or the painful, not even pleasure or pain, as such, but that within us to which pleasure and pain, the pleasant and the painful, speak." (285) In James's account, it is our feelings of will, controlling or in some way being involved with our attention and efforts, that forms the nucleus of mental life. "Being more incessantly there than any other single element of the mental life" he writes, "the other elements end by seeming to accrete round it and to belong to it. It becomes opposed to them as the permanent is opposed to the changing and inconstant." (*ibid.*)

It is important to note how cautious James is here: he does not pronounce with certainty what the will is, and indeed confesses that he is describing terrain where confusion is common. He chooses the more conservative strategy of describing the empirical features of volition, and further qualifies this by admitting his first-person reports here may not be generalized, and warns the reader against exaggerating the value of his reports. For James this inner self is connected "more or less vaguely" with a feeling of reflecting upon sensations before acting upon them. This is important, because is shows how consciousness is emergent from a complex cerebral life involving varied and competing impulses; consciousness for James had a useful role given to it by evolution: it was, as he put it, "a fighter for ends" (144). On this view, thought (imagining possibilities, weighing interests, etc.) was related to more instinctive or automatic processes, and it occurs because it has survived as a useful feature of human life. Hence, whether or not we are actually free to choose what we do (a metaphysical question, which James more-or-less shuns in *Principles*[94]), phenomenal volition was an important component of James's psychology.

In investigating the 'self of selves', James is not attempting to argue for the efficacy of self-consciousness, but rather to identify the character of what philosophers and psychologists have been so quick to assume exists. The role played by self-awareness in psychology is philosophically significant, as it is the phenomena that grounds one's sense of personal identity and location in the world of sensation, but James is of the view that postulating the existence of an ego creates more mysteries than it solves. (Furthermore, it runs afoul of his empirical leanings.) Here James engages in his most famous exercise in introspection. He asks 'how does this "central part of the self" feel?', and relates his experience. At first, he appears to arrive at an empirical discovery of mental activities. He relates his awareness of "a constant play of furtherances and hindrances" in his stream of thought, and how these "mutual inconsistencies and agreements, reinforcements and obstructions, which obtain amongst these objective matters reverberate backwards and produce what seem to be incessant reactions of my spontaneity upon them, welcoming or opposing, appropriating or disowning, striving with or against, saying yes or no." (286-7) But he immediately expresses dissatisfaction with the vagueness of this report and, scrutinizing his earlier efforts, comes to the following conclusion:

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[94] He does state in the chapter "Will", that psychology may assume determinism to be true. This is not his own view, which appears in "The Dilemma of Determinism" in *The Will to Believe*.

> [W]hen I forsake such general descriptions and grapple with particulars, coming to the closest possible quarters with the facts, *it is difficult for me to detect in the activity any purely spiritual element at all. Whenever my introspective glance succeeds in turning round quickly enough to catch one of these manifestations of spontaneity in the act, all it can ever feel distinctly is some bodily process, for the most part taking place within the head.* (287)

A page later he offers his conclusion of this line of thought: "our entire feeling of spiritual activity, or what commonly passes by that name, is really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked."

Note how in this discussion of the varieties of 'self', the concept of 'self' is used in each of these contexts independently of the other domains. The felt or empirical self is actually an amalgamation of three distinct kinds of self, each with its own building material (our possessions, social situation, and inner or private thoughts). We could talk coherently of the material self without such a thing as a social self or a spiritual self ever coming into existence. As it happens, for us there is this coincidence of selves, and this overlap of concepts of 'self' upon the same person's psychic life. Despite these different applications of the concept of self, it is worth noting that in each case the distinction between what falls under the concept and what does not is pragmatic (any useful context in which I can speak of some part of my property as part of myself will survive, situations where such talk 'fails to make a [positive] difference' will not). We distinguish between different self-concepts by the context of application (the concept of material self admits physical objects as indicators of a judgement 'me' or 'mine', while the social self-concept involves more ephemeral—though still public—data). James's criticism of the 'self of selves' as some kind of nucleus of the self writ large is pragmatic both insofar as he points to a confusion about what counts as evidence for such an entity, and in the manner he stresses the differing contexts of talking about 'me'. He even went so far as to provide an alternative account of this 'inner self' that would foreshadow the work in 'Does "Consciousness" Exist?'

Sciousness: a precursor to pure experience

Alongside James's criticism of his contemporaries' views of consciousness is a curious passage where he makes a distinction foreshadowing his later philosophy of pure experience. Consciousness is not a 'primary' mental element, or a platform upon which thoughts are projected or received. Rather, consciousness is a higher-order phenomenon, the product of processes that are more basic, and have a more obvious biological grounding. By consciousness, James is referring to that more articulate, reflexive kind of awareness, by which we are said to be aware of ourselves. The self-consciousness that philosophers

have often taken as logically prior to other cognitive states is treated by James as a property of the mind that emerges from more basic kinds of awareness.[95]

Against those who would argue that self-awareness forms part of an essential backdrop of any kind of state of mind, James offers a view of more limited cognitive states giving rise to moments of reflective consciousness. He euphemistically italicizes the 'con' of 'consciousness' to point out how this assumption is reflected in our language, and then makes his pitch:

> 'Instead, then, of the stream of thought being one of *con*-sciousness, "thinking its own existence along with whatever else it thinks" (as Ferrier says) it might be better called a stream of *Sciousness* pure and simple, thinking objects of some of which it makes what it calls a 'Me,' and only aware of its 'pure' Self in an abstract, hypothetic or conceptual way. Each 'section' of the stream would then be a bit of sciousness or knowledge of this sort, including and contemplating its 'me' and its 'not-me' as objects which work out their drama together, but not yet including or contemplating its own subjective being.' (290-1)

This re-casting of the role of consciousness in mental life should be kept in mind when considering James's particular version of phenomenalism. (See chapter two.) His disassembly of the traditional self of psychology continues, with a tip of the hat to Berkeley:

> "The sciousness in question would be the Thinker, and the existence of this thinker would be given to us rather as a logical postulate than as that direct inner perception of spiritual activity which we naturally believe ourselves to have. 'Matter,' as something behind physical phenomena, is a postulate of this sort." (291)[96]

James ends this section warning of the inwardness and subtlety of the phenomenon of thinking (291). After a detailed discussion of the phenomena of 'self-love', self-esteem and 'self-seeking and self-preservation' (topics relevant what we now call clinical and social psychology), James in summarizing makes an interesting remark. He notes the difference between I and 'me' vis-à-vis psychology, which is to say, James does not think the two terms exist simply to satisfy the grammarian. They denote different psychological objects: the 'I' denotes a unity of some kind[97], while 'me' refers—as explored previously—to an aggregate of phenomena which can be identified (350, 379; the structural revisions to the chapter as reproduced in *Psychology: The Briefer Course* (1892) are worth comparing).

Edelman: A Useful Addition to James's Physiological Model of the Mind

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[95] Logical priority and temporal priority are not confused by James on this issue. His concern is to remove the former notion about consciousness from its traditional pride-of-place in philosophical psychology.
[96] James ends this parenthetical argument with an interesting remark: "Between the postulated Matter and the postulated Thinker, the sheet of phenomena would then swing, some of them (the 'realities') pertaining more to the matter, others (the fictions, opinions, and errors) pertaining more to the Thinker." (*ibid.*)
[97] This claim proved a long-standing source of trouble for James. See "The Knowing of Things Together" and *A Pluralistic Universe*, lecture V.

The recent work of Gerald Edelman is worth introducing to this exposition of James for two reasons. Edelman purposely models his psychology on James's, using James's five criteria of mental life in "The Stream of Thought" as a guideline. Theories of the mind that don't fit James's picture are suspect on this view, and this is a useful antidote for readers who find James's views too old-fashioned or too close to idealism to be of contemporary use. Edelman helps resuscitate the 'scientific' side of James: the former has the benefit of an extra century's worth of neurophysiology, and his more up-to-date views on how nervous systems are put together add important detail to James's sketch. For all his physiology in *Principles*, much of the discussion is frustratingly general, or speculative. This does not necessarily vitiate any of James's philosophical claims, because his physiology is basically sound, and the conclusions he draws from it are fairly 'open ended.' In addition to increasing the level of physiological detail, Edelman also makes new connections with Darwinism that support James's ideas about the development of consciousness.[98] James would undoubtedly have applauded Edelman's modifications, as they were aimed at extending the scientific reach of psychology without eliminating subjective experience. Indeed, one of Edelman's primary goals in explicating his theory of mind is arguing against reductionism. Qualia, or the way it feels to be a conscious being, must figure in to any substantive theory of the mind.[99] The use of Edelman herein is therefore strategic: a brief sketch of his view can give a fuller picture of James's psychology, how the pieces fit together. Edelman also introduces some terminology useful for exegesis of James, and a look at 'emergent' properties such as memory can elucidate the Jamesian strategy of constructing models of cerebral life analogically, which will be an important theme in later chapters. Most of all, putting James's nineteenth-century psychology in a contemporary context will underscore its continued influence and plausibility. The stream of thought is not just pulled out of a hat by James, but to show its relations to the rest of his psychology would require summary of his chapters on brain function, neural function, habit, attention, perception, and many others. With Edelman as a propadeutic model, we may move more quickly.

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[98] Since James, like so many philosophers after him, utilized Darwinism as both a physical mechanism (which might occur elsewhere in nature) and as a metaphor for depicting change in metaphysics (pragmatism can be, and often is, viewed as a form of epistemological Darwinism—lecture V of *Pragmatism* is a good example of this), it should be pointed out that Edelman sticks to the former.

[99] Edelman is in the interesting position of claiming that any theory of mind worth having must give something approximating an explanation for the qualia of consciousness and also claiming that scientific theories are not the sorts of things that can fully describe qualia, as the language of science strives to be 'qualia free'. "Given the fact that qualia are experienced directly only by single individuals, our methodological difficulty becomes obvious. *We cannot construct a phenomenal psychology that can be shared in the same way as a physics can be shared.* What is directly experienced as qualia by one individual cannot be fully shared by another individual as an observer. An individual can report his or her experience to an observer, but that report must always be partial, imprecise, and relative to his or her own personal context. Not only are qualia fleeting, but interventions designed to probe them may change them in unforeseen ways. Furthermore, many conscious and non-conscious processes simultaneously affect each person's subjective experience. Individuals may have their own private theories of the totality of their *individual* conscious experiences, but these can never be scientific theories. This is because other observers do not have adequate experimental controls available to them." (*Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*, p. 113)

Evolutionary Neurophysiology: Then and Now

From our point of view, James's 'evolutionary' psychology has many gaps. Evolution as James understood it did not have a clear mechanism for heredity, and thus our understanding of natural selection is different from James's. Following Edelman, I will call the view that combines Darwin's natural selection with genetic heredity 'neodarwinism', to distinguish it from the older view.[100] While our picture of heredity has become intertwined with our theories of physics and chemistry, old biases about the ontogenesis of an organism remain. James had to contend with innatists and classical empiricists who propagated pictures of mental development that denied either an environmental role or the contrasting influence of heredity. Edelman has to contend with modern thinkers who are blinded by a picture that suggests that genetics is the driving force behind brain morphology, and this struggle is very similar to James's struggle against the Spencerians who thought environmental experience was the dominating causal factor in the development of the brain. James ridiculed the Spencerian view, suggesting that if it were true, "a race of dogs bred for generations, say in the Vatican, with characters of visual shape, sculptured in marble, presented to their eyes, in every variety of form and combination, ought to discriminate before long the finest shades of these peculiar characters." (381) Since experience does not mould dogs into art lovers, the structure of the organism must play some role in how the environment is navigated and experienced. With Edelman, what he must combat is the view that our genetic code governs the construction of our brain, either preprogramming it to some initial mode, or building it such that it can 'bootstrap' itself, and begin to sort stimuli in an evolutionarily fruitful way.[101] (83) "The genetic code does not provide a specific wiring diagram for this repertoire [of original neuronal groups]. Rather, it imposes a set of *constraints*[102] on the selectional process." Edelman is going to provide a theory of brain morphology that has a great deal in common with James's, and he will use Darwin's idea of natural selection to do it.

Edelman borrowed from his own work in immunology in his development of a theory of neuronal selection. His so-called Neural Darwinism supplies a selection mechanism to account for the development of a brain, especially the fine-tuning of maps that coordinate sensory inputs and allocate neural resources based on 'interest'. Edelman relates the (now) well-observed phenomenon of neural migration: neurons

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[100] Edelman schematically renders neodarwinism thusly: natural selection + Mendelean genetics + DNA = our modern theory. (Edelman, *op. cit.*, p. 47.)

[101] Paul Churchland, among many others, has noted that given the number of neurons and synapses found in mature brain, there simply isn't enough room in the human genome to 'instruct' the requisite cells to build a brain. Growth of a nervous system can be guided by genetics, but not ultimately controlled by it. This is coupled with the fact that identical twins, who share a genome, do not have identical brains. (*The Engine of Reason, The Seat of the Soul* (MIT Press, 1995). *Cf.* Edelman, p. 83; Greenfield, *Op. cit.*)

[102] Edelman's talk of constraints is very Jamsian. Philosophically, it allows him to rebut counterfactual objections by philosophers by pointing to physiology, without offering a specific causal sequence that leads to a predetermined outcome. This also highlights where James got a pragmatic dictum so similar to Wittgenstein's notion of the sense of a proposition, although the notion of semantic constraints could also have come from Peirce's account of doubt.

slide up and down sheets of cells, especially during early embryological development. These migrations are influenced by the success or failure of neurons to establish fruitful connections with their new neighbors. Without such stimulation, neurons either die or form new connections. This is analogous to another well-known neurological phenomenon, namely the 'exploratory branching' of the dendrites and axons of situated neurons, which occurs throughout life (including adulthood.) Edelman explains the success of neural migration with the aid of Darwin's model for the success of species. Neural Darwinism is a theory of natural selection applied to populations of neurons. It is a lower-level version of James's team of attention and habit. The processes that give rise to a mature brain are strongly guided by the 'value' of environmental stimulation and the emerging pathways are strengthened by habitual use. (Notice that successful connection replaces the reproductive success characteristic of evolution proper.) Just as James has ideas in the stream of thought undergo a survival test, Edelman has populations of neurons and their synaptic connections do the same.

It should be noted that this idea of survival in the cerebrum was promulgated by James: in his chapter on neurophysiology he advanced the idea that individual neural pathways would flourish with the reinforcement stimulation provides, while unstimulated pathways will atrophy, giving ground to their competitors. This neurological point served an important role in James's philosophy, as the broader picture of the brain as a plastic and semi-stable organ requires a stabilizing force such as consciousness to augment the orchestration of cerebral systems at key moments. Thus James's attack on epiphenomenalism in "The Automaton Theory" (*Principles*, chapter v), was built on his Darwinian view of nervous pathways strengthening and weakening over time. The persistence of consciousness in the animal kingdom points to the likelihood of a role for consciousness, and in James's view it served to reduce the chaos of a system as replete with pathways as a human cerebrum. (Much of this account involved the competition of various pathways, and James's story of reinforcement of habits has had a long life in psychology and pedagogy.) James's philosophical account of consciousness has roots in these physiological points about neural plasticity and a Darwinian struggle among habits and reflexes. (James's account of habit is sufficiently rich to warrant our return to this topic in the next chapter.) In articulating this view, James was relying on the reticular theory of nerves (see below, p. 95), which was simply the denial of a chemical mode of transmission: the remainder of his view stands today. Nerve pathways are strengthened and refined by stimulation, and grow such that they 'map onto' the cerebral cortex, committing regions of that part of the brain to processing signals to and from specific regions of the body, or the various sense organs. This theory admits of a simple experimental test, to which James (and many contemporary authors) points: sever any afferent (incoming) nerve in a juvenile brain, and the cortical space normally allocated to processing that incoming signal will tackle a new set of signals. The neighboring nerves will 'invade' that region of the cerebral cortex.

It should be noticed that discussion of Neural Darwinism has thus far been restricted to the cerebral cortex, that region of the brain James called the 'most plastic.' The 'lower' structures of the brain are less variable, though their growth can be significantly impaired by degradation of the migratory neural processes.[103] From these lower brain structures come the remaining pieces of Edelman's puzzle: the more mechanical aspects of cerebral function come from these regions. These parts of the brain (the brain stem, cerebellum, pons, etc.) also grow in a unique environment and are thereby themselves unique in structure, although they are more strongly constrained in the way in which they may develop. This constraint is ultimately hereditary in nature, but the mode of delivery, so to speak, is environmental. These regions do not 'map' with the range of variation that is seen in the cortical regions: the types of neurons that develop in the cerebellum, for example, do not branch out in the same far-reaching way that cortical neurons do. Thus, even though the cerebellum is one of the most dense regions in the brain in terms of neuronal population, the neurons in this region do not begin to approach the sophistication of the cortex: the connections there are much more numerous, and far-reaching, and dependant upon individual history. Cortical connections admit of greater possibilities, and can link neurons up with distant fellows in a way not seen in the lower brain. This means that James's notion of cerebral plasticity can be cashed out in terms of neurology, specifically neural morphology.[104] Cerebellar neurons receive massive inputs from other regions of the brain, but they receive them *en masse*, with few possibilities of individuation among pathways. In contrast, cortical neuronal groups are highly specialized (they too work in groups—I mean simply to call attention their variability) and distinguished from one another in terms of where their inputs come from, and where their signals are sent. Experience plays a crucial role in the development of cortical systems, while differences among individual members of a species are far less evident in the so-called homeostatic systems and other systems not directly connecting up with the world[105].

Loading the Dice: The Function of Consciousness in the Cerebral Environment

Edelman argues that for a neuronal system to emerge from a mere population or group of neurons, proliferation of connections plus selective culling of those connections must occur. But more than simple selection[106] is required: values must exist somewhere, somehow, within a system of neurons to make their

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[103] Susan Greenfield briefly chronicles the sensitivity of regions like the cerebellum—a very 'rigid' system compared to the cortex—to interruptions in neural migration in her *The Human Brain: A Guided Tour*, p. 100.

[104] Edelman's cashing out of the concept of plasticity seems sensible given our current, neodarwinist, beliefs: plasticity is "relative stability of structure under selective mapping events." See Edelman's remarks on memory and evolution, at 203*ff*.

[105] Regarding the cerebellum, its connections are largely with the spinal cord and the cortex: it thus enjoys indirect contact with the world.

[106] Here it is easy to confuse natural selection with what Edelman is calling 'neural Darwinism', the former selects the phenotypic features of an organism, and transmits these changes via DNA during reproduction of the organism. Somatic selection, or shaping of bodily systems via stimuli, is not transmitted from generation to generation: it is a form of selection that informs the emergent structure of an individual

overall function of a kind that contributes to the organism's chances for survival. Edelman points to the 'value laden' nature of brain structures that show little variation within a species, and even between species. The limbic system, in conjunction with other systems such as the brain stem, not only regulate autonomic functions like cardiac function and the endocrine system, but provide what Edelman calls hedonic inputs for the brain. Many of these are well-understood systems, relying on fairly simple feedback from the nervous system to control their output. Hunger (including its psychological manifestations, such as altered attention) would be a familiar example.

What is the purpose of introducing Edelman's talk of value-laden memories? It helps to explain how higher-level features, such as selective attention, emerge, and it shows how they play a useful role in a conscious organism's survival. James insisted both that selective attention was a basic feature of consciousness, and that consciousness had this effective role to play in life. Consciousness is a system co-ordinating other complex neurological systems, increasing their overall usefulness, preserving flexibility of response without leading to chaotic outputs (142*ff*). The object-directed nature of consciousness (James's fourth criterion, above) and its tendency towards selectivity find their cerebral counterparts in the value-laden way in which perceptions are categorized and correlated to form what Edelman calls perceptual concepts. Visual and tactile experiences of an apple, *e.g.*, get associated with gustatory memories to form an 'apple-concept', which forms part of a conscious organism's 'perceptual lexicon'. Subsequently, when such an object enters our perceptual field, it does so not as a simple visual impression, but as an object, and one that is correlated to a specific hedonic domain: ingestion.[107] This account fleshes out James's talk of consciousness being selective and interested, and suggests parallels with Wittgenstein's many discussions of seeing a figure under a given interpretation, such as the duckrabbit or a sketch of a human face.

Edelman's model of the basic constituents of the mind is based on James's insistence that consciousness be a 'fighter for ends' (141) and his distinction between the various cortical maps and more 'hard wired' brain structures corresponds neatly to a distinction we find in James between the mechanisms of the lower brain and the more flexible or plastic neural connections found in the hemispheres (this is discussed in the section on 'habit' in the succeeding chapter). This model links neurology and the study of habits and reflexes in psychology, and it is one of the lasting contributions of nineteenth century experimental psychology to the science of the present day. (The mechanisms are a combination of involuntary responses, instincts, habits,

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organism. Edelman's two main examples of somatic selection are the immune system and the evolution of neuronal groups within the brain (hence his 'theory of neuronal group selection'.) See Edelman, chs. 8-9.

[107] Other researchers have hypothesized the existence of higher-level cognitive domains that are constitutive of consciousness though the connections to our hedonic inputs are less than clear. Among these are our native attention to living beings (characterized by types of motion that have areas of the visual cortex dedicated to their detection). This leads to interesting speculations about the differences in perceptual processing between higher organisms displaying social relations and more solitary creatures. A brief example of human perceptual categorization along these lines can be found in Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*, MIT press, 1995.

and what we would call acts of volition. For James, the meaning of each of these terms tends to be determined contextually, *i.e.*, an act of volition is what it is in virtue of it being less 'automatic' than a reflex response.) Furthermore, Edelman's theory preserves the basic desiderata of Jamesian psychology: consciousness is real, efficacious, and linked to our existence as biological organisms shaped by heredity and individual experience.

Memory, Plasticity, Adaptation:

Plasticity, as used by James and subsequent researchers like Edelman, is a term that connotes features of the brain that have piqued many a psychologist's curiosity. The brain seems capable of storing things that enter its realm of perception, and recalling these past events with varying degrees of accuracy. Furthermore, creatures with complex cerebral systems are capable of learning, of altering their responses to stimuli, and these alterations frequently display a teleological character that demands explanation. But plasticity is also a feature of things that are not brains, and thus the term carries with it another useful connotation: analogues to what brains do can be found elsewhere in the world. Exploring memory as it occurs in complex systems, systems that display plasticity of some form, is a way of naturalizing one feature of the mind that makes it seem most immaterial.

What is memory? Edelman gives a striking definition: memory is the ability to repeat a performance (102). This is a pragmatic definition of memory, insofar as it is meant to call attention to what memory *does* in the contexts in which it appears. With the function of memory at the center of attention, we may also submit this definition to a pragmatic constraint: judging a system to have memory is a matter of applying the concept 'repetition of a performance' in a way that makes sense given the kind of system under scrutiny. An immune system should not be said to lack mnemonic properties because it cannot display the symptoms of nostalgia or wistfulness.[108] Edelman goes on to distinguish between 'replicative' memory (*e.g.*, computer) and 'dynamic' memory, which is characteristic of living systems. (Edelman's first example, DNA, is somewhat confusing, as it provides an example of an apparent replicative memory system, but the evolution of a genotype is dynamic, hence there is often confusion about the ascription of 'living system' to DNA. Edelman's reference in his memory-diagram is to the phenomenon of heredity, which is a function of DNA which admits of imperfect replication (without this feature, evolution would not occur), is meant to convey a measure of dynamic memory, though he is not terribly clear on the matter.) Systems with dynamic memory are capable of evolving: they produce variance, and interaction with an environment leads to selection, thus altering the population which constitutes that system.

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[108] The point here is a Wittgensteinian one: It makes no sense to say an immune system lacks the ability to be nostalgic, because these are not among the possible performances we can conceive of. It isn't clear what such a performance would look like, hence the denial of the possibility lacks sense.

In attempting to explain how human beings can recall images, remember past events, and learn (modifying their responses to past experiences), Edelman points to different systems we can describe as 'having memory'. This goes some way both to demystifying a mental capacity and pointing to how we employ words, especially psychological terms, in novel ways when exploring the nature of minds and brains. Attention to the context in which we look for evidence of memory will alter what counts as the manifestations of memory; in some circumstances it can look quite straightforwardly mechanical, while elsewhere memory performances look less mechanical and more like part of our lived experience.

In figure 1-1 a sketch of some systems capable of mnemonic performances (following Edelman) is given, with examples ranging from genetic heredity to the visual processing centers of the human brain. In immune systems, a mnemonic performance is producing an antibody in response to a foreign body at an rate of production greater than the original immune response. The system alters such that it is a more efficient defence against a familiar pathogen. It 'learns' only when we speak anthropomorphically. Similarly, a neural circuit is conditioned to respond to a stimulus in an improved way, but again, talk of 'training' or even 'improvement' is understood as euphemistic. The unit of time used to measure the duration of a memory is related to the constitution of the system under investigation: in heredity, memory is marked across generations, while immunoresponse is a property retained for the lifetime of a single organism. A reflex response may fade over time, leaving us with a shorter span of time within which we mark the emergence (and disappearance) of a memory.

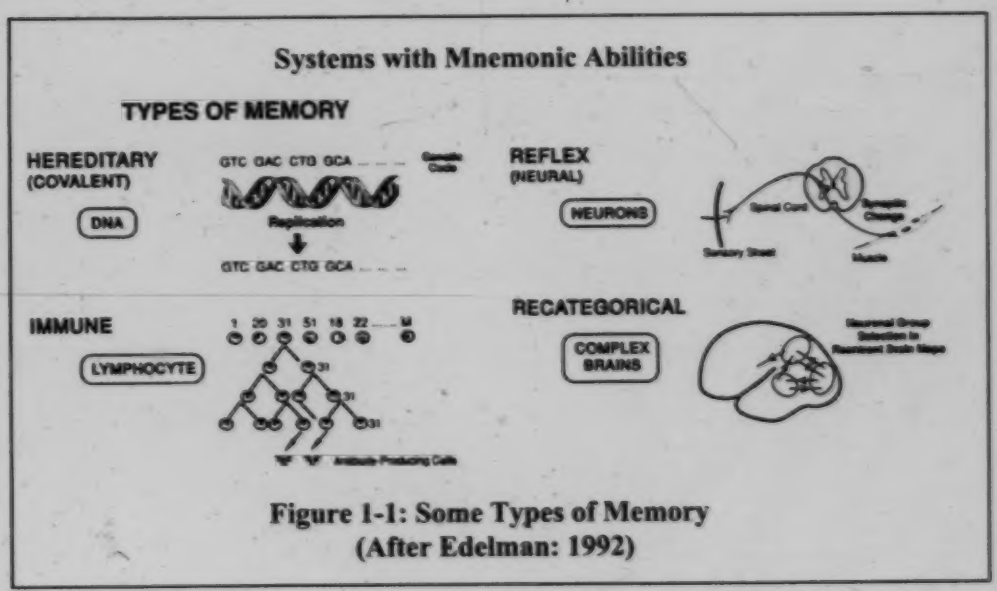

Figure 1-1: Some Types of Memory
(After Edelman: 1992)

Each time a researcher stipulates the meaning of 'memory', the grammatical rules for applying the term are modified. Awareness of this fact can be lost, leading to confusion expressed by questions like: 'How can persons and their cells both possess memories?' Or: 'Are our memories nothing more than responses caused by prior stimuli?'[109] Preliminary investigations into cortical memory systems also seem to fail to capture the essential characteristics of memory, describing as they frequently do the changes in the cortex as akin to the impressions left on a beach by rainfall, or other physical media shaped by events in a self-ordering manner.[110]

If we ascend from cases involving molecules or cells to larger, more complicated systems like human brains, we return to familiar linguistic usage, coupled with a level of complexity in both explanation and evidence which makes the retreat from figurative parlance cold comfort. In the case of this most complex system, what counts as remembering has both a complicated physiological explanation and a dizzying variety of mental manifestations. Memories of one's childhood home will be physically manifest in the resulting alterations in cortical areas that have been modified by the selection and processing of certain events in short-term memory, selected in part for their connections to cerebral value-systems and of course, their repeated stimulation over frequent and prolonged encounters. (Memories also have to be rehearsed in some fashion in order to be retained—as the brain is a dynamic memory system, memories that are particularly active in that system carve themselves a deeper seat.) Regarding the experience of memory, much can be said about the variety with which memories are known and expressed, though I suspect the following *aperçu* will suffice. Taking our example of a childhood home, memories of that place can be recalled in the form of a verbal description of its contents; one may give an account of its character (which will involve comparison with other architectural styles, among other things); one may answer questions of a precise, objective nature (giving the street address, the year in which the house was built) that we may verify, or a memoir can be given of how the rooms appeared to the agent as a child and resident.[111] Moreover, memory need not be linguistic: one can draw a sketch, or imagine—that is, voluntarily produce a visual image that is necessarily private. All of these might qualify as what Wittgenstein called the 'memory reaction' (*Investigations*, §343) which normally serves as an available consequence of 'having a memory of something', but which may also serve as proof for an interlocutor who expresses doubt. When not engaged in neurophysiology, memories appear to manifest themselves in these reactions, and not in anything else. Scholars are beginning to take a new look at Wittgenstein's comments on memory, taking his point to be as much about cognition as about the linguistic criteria for having a memory.[112] On both

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[109] Robin Haack raises this issue in a relevant context: "Philosophical perplexity arises when we fail to notice that an expression which has a characteristic use in one context may not have this use when imported into another context. An example would be thinking of time as something which *flows*, like a river." "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19(2) Apr. 1982, p. 166.

[110] *Cf.* E. de Bono, *The Mechanism of the Mind* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1969), chapter 5.

[111] This last case has a richness of potential few would imagine. Oliver Sacks' case "The Landscape of His Dreams" in *An Anthropologist on Mars* is a useful report (New York: Vintage books, 1995).

[112] Joachim Schulte, *op. cit.*, provides the best account.

Edelman's and James's model of memory, there is no one feature accompanying every remembrance, rather it is the functional description (the ability to repeat a performance) that takes center stage.

In this comparison of memories, or of mnemonic capacities of various kinds of systems, we must not overlook what is obvious, *viz*., that the memory displayed by an immune system differs greatly from the memory functions displayed by normal human beings. In Edelman's words, "memory takes on its properties as a function of the system in which it appears." (204) In Wittgensteinian terms, the conditions of the sense of 'memory' have shifted with each context, and thus the meaning of memory does not retain the kind of stability a strict definition may lend. The enormous difference in the level of complexity of the immune system versus the brain offers a partial explanation of why this is so, nevertheless, we talk of 'memory' as a property of both systems. Regarding figure 1-1, we may see that these systems differ in terms of their mechanisms of selection, their flexibility, and the degree of subtlety with which they may display their abilities.[113] In searching for explanations of these differences, one would conceivably point to not only the sophistication of their respective component parts, but to the connections and interactions between them. This is the kind of shift of meaning that may occur in philosophical psychology (or, for that matter, in mathematics) without our noticing it. It is a case of overlapping 'language games', where the same term is used with different rules in each context. In the case of a system of antibody-producing cells, we make a crude picture of them 'remembering' a previous pathogen to better explain the changing functions they exhibit. Wittgenstein's concern was not that we have such pictures—for they can be quite illuminating—but that as we lose sight of the original application, confusions regarding the grammar of an expression may arise, and we may distort the original expression beyond recognition.[114] The picture of four types of memory here will be a useful reminder, both of James's functional analysis, and Wittgenstein's picture of overlapping language-games.

Primary vs. Higher-level Consciousness

As previously noted, Edelman takes a good deal of inspiration from James, and uses James's five 'marks of the mental' as a checklist against which to measure his own theory of consciousness. Here we might introduce a distinction drawn from James, but made more explicit and useful by Edelman. One of the virtues of Edelman's model is a distinction of forms of consciousness which goes some way to clarifying questions about whether non-human animals possess consciousness, whether consciousness is different from thought, and the relation of perception to conception and the self. It is a very simple distinction. Edelman deems 'primary consciousness' to be the kind of immediate awareness most mammals appear to

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[113] According to Edelman, brains possess one type of relation among their parts that other dynamic systems, from genes to jungles, lack: reentrant signalling. This inherited feature links cerebral regions in ways which greatly adds to the flexibility of the nervous system in terms of its potential cognitive, mnemonic and afferent abilities. See chapter 4 of *The Remembered Present*.

possess, while he calls the reflexive, linguistic form of consciousness unique to humans 'higher-level' consciousness. This distinction makes explicit a similar one found in James, as I shall shortly attempt to show.

Edelman likens primary consciousness to the presentation of a 'scene'[115], of which an organism is the witness. Objects within the perceptual range of the animal are categorized (based on past learning and present bodily demands) and attention is likewise focused based on what things an animal perceives and how it is comported. An animal experiencing fear in unknown surroundings will be looking for hiding places or escape routes rather than food, and this will colour its attention. Aspects of the environment recognized as fitting present desires or needs will stand out from their surroundings, and continuous re-processing of inputs from the outside world and from the body's somatic, hedonic and kinaesthetic inputs will effect a number of combinations yielding the continuity characteristic of a conscious 'scene'. For example, an animal with low blood-sugar and an empty belly, that is not startled or otherwise under stress, could be expected to combine visual[116] and olfactory perceptions to yield a concrete object—a morsel of food—of which it will be aware as long as the morsel is nearby (and producing stimuli). The existing bodily states will combine with this perception to launch typical hunger responses: salivation, increased cognitive arousal, and food-seeking or consumatory behaviour. The scene here, as set by the morsel of food and the bodily state of the organism, is simply 'dinner time'.

The scene, as Edelman describes it, is akin to the picture of experience found in phenomenalism. The immediate physical surroundings and current bodily comportment form the setting for consciousness, and the objects stand out from that background are selected based on features of the organism which are not available to it through consciousness. These features include past learning and species-specific behaviour and sensory modalities. With primary consciousness as one's sole manner of cognition, the world is quite a local sort of thing: it is spatially and temporally restricted (by our sensory abilities and short-term memory), its objects are identified by their associated properties appearing continuously and in conjunction, and there is no such thing as an enduring self, only the drives and curiosity of the moment (and of course, as our level of arousal diminishes, so do the affective and intensional aspects of awareness fade). Beings with primary consciousness occupy an econiche, rather than a world.[117] In Edelman's words, a scene is "a

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[114] See, *e.g.*, Wittgenstein's remarks on the picture of blindness as 'darkness inside the head of the blind man' at §423*ff*. (Discussed below, chapter three.)

[115] In using this term, Edelman may have been borrowing from Köhler, who also talks of a 'sensory scene'. See *Gestalt Psychology*, p. 103.

[116] One fact frequently overlooked in all this is how the brain must constantly combine and compare current retinal messages with ones in the immediate past, and further compare these with inputs from oculormotor nerves and other proprioceptive data to yield a cognition of a solitary, unmoving object available for manipulation. Even a simple case of visual perception is a complex, composite affair, which on Edelman's view requires something like a 'specious present' to combine series of sensations in a sufficiently ordered way to yield perception. On the specious present in James, see chapter two.

[117] This distinction can be found in Edelman, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*, p. 150.

spatiotemporally ordered set of categorizations of familiar and nonfamiliar events, some with and some without necessary physical or causal connections to others in the same scene." (*Op. cit.*, p. 188.) Most importantly, the capacity for short-term memory and concurrent reprocessing of perception and learned categories lead to a scene with a smooth temporal 'flow', or what James called the continuity of experience. The organs of succession order incoming signals, giving rise to a specious present: a scene that 'hangs together' temporally, and out of which a larger scene—the world—can be constructed using linguistic concepts and memory.[118] The extending of a scene beyond the perceptual boundaries of the specious present is what Edelman calls higher-level consciousness, and is what gives human beings the ability to construct a sense of personal identity, and the ability to locate their present experience within a larger spatio-temporal background. Compared with higher-level consciousness, primary consciousness seems both unfamiliar and limited in its efficacy. As Edelman notes:

> An animal with primary consciousness sees the room the way a beam of light illuminates it. Only that which is in the beam is explicitly in the remembered present; all else is darkness. This does not mean that an animal with primary consciousness cannot have long-term memory or act on it. Obviously, it can, but it cannot, in general, be aware of that memory or plan an extended future for itself based on that memory. (*Ibid.*, p. 122.)[119]

Higher-level consciousness involves the emergence of a self-concept, and a change in behaviour and attention that signals a shift from short-term to long-term planning, often involving repression of immediate impulses. Volitions are repressed and perceptions ignored in favour of planned actions and expected perceptions, selected from our knowledge of a world (as opposed to an immediate scene or our surroundings) in accord with our long-term values, themselves constituents of this model of the self. Higher-level consciousness also involves the organizing of perceptual experience by concepts, particularly, the experience of time (the specious present) is categorized according to a conceived arrangement of past and future, and the sense of location in primary consciousness may be similarly situated within a broader conceptual map of where 'here' fits into the world as one knows it.[120] Though I have not stressed the point here, Edelman reminds us that much of what we see emerging in individuals with higher-level consciousness is the product of social learning, including language acquisition.

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[118] Note the relation to traditional empiricism here: sense-impressions were traditionally assumed to be linked by the mind via a form of inference (Locke, Berkeley) or by habit (Hume). In the Edelman model, which follows James, sensory inputs are integrated by neuronal systems below (or prior to) the level of primary consciousness. Awareness is thus of a unified local environment (a scene) out of which individual sensations may be discriminated.

[119] An interesting comment echoing this characterization of primary and higher-level consciousness can be found in *Principles* at 605. In considering the remembered (specious) present and long-term memory James compares the former to a theatre stage, with the latter serving as a backdrop that effectively extends our temporal vision to a further horizon.

[120] For details on the cultural variation in organizing the sense of place, see McLaughlin, *The Ends of Our Exploring*, and Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2000.)

The purpose of this examination of Edelman's model is to round out James's account. Notions like 'sciousness' correspond to the primary consciousness that underlies the higher-level consciousness that mature, language-using human beings exhibit. The possession of concepts transforms this primary awareness of the present moment and local surroundings into one's location in a larger, known world. Higher-level consciousness is vastly more sophisticated and flexible, but it is also emergent from primary consciousness, and depends upon its mechanisms. In both cases learning yields a form of perception James emphasized, that of 'figured' awareness, or perception of part of the scene as linked with a learned concept, such as 'food'. More of James's views on the psychology of perception will be explicated in the succeeding chapter. Edelman shows what James's longer account in the *Principles* was intended to provide. Indeed, his notion of a conscious 'scene' is particularly useful, as it shows how James's insistence on the selective, intentional and continuous nature of consciousness was more than just a reaction against earlier empiricists. On the contrary, such notions 'radicalize' James's empiricism, in the sense of augmenting empiricism's appeal to the facts of human physiology. The aspects that are united in conscious life such as perceptual continuity, flux, attention, bodily interest, intentionality and selectivity are vital characteristics any model of consciousness must display. Of particular note are these overlapping kinds of consciousness: they highlight a possible equivocation of 'thought' (and a subsidiary question about the ability to employ concepts) that will affect the disagreement between Wittgenstein and James over the possibilities of thought without language (see chapter three). It is hoped that Edelman's 'scene' will provide a memorable model in the next chapter, when James's holistic variation of phenomenalism is examined. There I will argue that given the continuity of such a scene, traditional notions of 'logical construction' of objects out of sense data may be avoided.[121]

'The Singularity of Our Being'

In writing about his native Mexico, Octavio Paz speaks metaphorically of the flowering of self-consciousness in the adolescent, and the place of this moment in the course of life:

> All of us, at some moment, have had a vision of our existence as something unique, untransferable and very precious. This revelation almost always takes place during adolescence. Self-discovery is above all the realization that we are alone: it is the opening of an impalpable, transparent wall—that of our consciousness—between the world and ourselves. It is true that we sense our aloneness almost as soon as we are born, but children and adults can transcend their solitude and forget themselves in games or work. The adolescent, however, vacillates between infancy and youth, halting for a moment before the infinite richness of the world. He is astonished at the fact of his being, and this astonishment leads to reflection: as he leans over the river of his consciousness, he asks himself if the face that appears there, disfigured by the water, is his own. The singularity of his being, which is pure sensation in children, becomes a problem and a question.[122]

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[121] The phrase is A. J. Ayer's. See "Phenomenalism" in *Philosophical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1954).
[122] Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico* (trans: L. Kemp) New York: Grove Press, 1961, p. 9.

His point, whether talking of nation-states or human beings, is straightforward. Self-awareness, which we are occasionally tempted to regard in philosophy as the *ens realissimum* of our inner selves, arises from very familiar, and very comprehensible causes. Moreover, it is not a phenomenon that is symptomatic of maturity, rather, it is endemic to periods of life where our identity is most unstable and precarious. It arises in response to a need of the organism, of the person, as he or she fully enters our world, *i.e.*, as he or she *becomes* a person in the familiar sense. It is not surprising that it should occasionally be regarded as a citadel by those experiencing this process of realizing one's sentience and tempering it against one's surroundings. This, I suggest, is how James viewed consciousness. Like Edelman's notion of higher-level consciousness emerging from its primary forerunner, consciousness emerges from a stream of 'sciousness' that lacks many of the properties philosophers would usually ascribe to the stream of thought. As shall become clear when we consider Wittgenstein's analysis of the phenomena surrounding speech in chapter four, he too offers an account that naturalizes many of the unusual properties of the mind traditionally taken as essential to human awareness.

Hopefully, however plausible this first sketch of James may seem, the exposition has brought with it some tools for later use. Edelman's work gives us some useful distinctions for understanding James, and, as I later hope to show, for Wittgenstein's later writings. Edelman displays more clearly than James the potential for population thinking in psychology and neurology, without denying qualia or parroting the philosophical claims of behaviourism which have coloured so much of the past century's psychology. If we look at his model of consciousness, we may see a fruitful continuation of the project of the *Principles*. Primary consciousness is akin James's perceptual realm, or to 'sciousness', if we choose to take that suggestion with us, while the linguistic-conceptual realm of higher consciousness (which includes self-consciousness) corresponds to the parts of James's model of the mind that go beyond immediate awareness to the world where perceptions are extended by the new function of conception. The fact that the concepts we do possess are for the most part mundane and concrete at first (*i.e.*, we start with concepts of 'food' or 'red' or 'things that will burn me' rather than metaphysical concepts or abstract generalizations) seems to fit well with James's evolutionary account. If we think of consciousness as in this sense emergent from simple epistemic states more akin to reactions or reflexes than as a platform upon which cognitive acts might be performed, we might begin to approach the subject of metaphysics from something approximating James's point of view. Furthermore, with Edelman's point about memory serving both as a description of the various systems contributing to the mental life of human beings, and as a case study in applying a single term in a continuum of contexts with only partial similarity, we will be well situated for what follows. Not only for examining the radical empiricist position in some detail, but also for considering the hypothesis that despite misunderstanding many of James's claims, Wittgenstein was led by his criticism of James to a very similar point of view.

Chapter Two – The Finished Arch

Radical Empiricism: Description and Role in James's Oeuvre

The essays that comprise *Essays in Radical Empiricism* extend the analysis of consciousness James gives in 'Does "Consciousness" Exist?' to treat topics in the wider field of metaphysics. Solipsism, the problem of other minds, and the problem of our knowledge of the external world are among those treated in the essays of 1904-5. These essays address explicitly questions that were bracketed (partially or wholly)[1] during James's *Principles* period. Although they are a good source of information on James's philosophical orientation and convictions, they are not among those texts known to have influenced Wittgenstein. John Passmore[2] has claimed that Wittgenstein had read *Pragmatism*, though he does not provide documentary evidence of this. His support seems to derive from interviews with Wittgenstein's students and colleagues.[3]

James advertised his radical empiricism throughout his later works. He described *The Will to Believe* (1897) as an example of it in practice[4], rather than a defense of the theory, and his later works included pleas for the view, but no technical argument for it as such. In his *Pragmatism* (1907), James backtracked somewhat, emphasizing the logical distinctness of radical empiricism from his pragmatism, but in *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), he was gently advertising it once again.[5]

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[1] The problem of other minds, for example, was more or less explicitly addressed in *Principles* despite James's claim to omit metaphysical debates from his text. See the chapter "The Conscious Automaton Theory."

[2] John Passmore, *One Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., 1966, p. 592n4. His is also the source of the strange and infamous claim that the *Principles* was the only book visible on Wittgenstein's bookshelf. The latter claim comes from a former student, A. C. Jackson.

[3] Likewise, Russell Goodman has claimed that Wittgenstein's lectures in his later years were fairly peppered with mention of James, to the point of entire classes at Cambridge being devoted to a single sentence from the *Principles*. Goodman states this on the basis of his own personal communication with Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Geach. See "What Wittgenstein Learned from William James", p. 353n39.

[4] *Op. Cit.*, preface, p. 5.

[5] The years 1907-9 saw a fair amount of flux in James's stated views on the subject of the relation of the pragmatist method and radical empiricism, in large part because of James's efforts to win a wider audience for the former. It is commonplace in our own time to regard radical empiricism as a dead end, while pragmatism remains a live option for many philosophers. In 1907 James was sounding a separatist note, as can be seen from his introduction to *Pragmatism*: "let me say that there is no logical connection between pragmatism, as I understand it, and a doctrine which I have recently set forth as 'radical empiricism'. The latter stands on its own feet. One may entirely reject it and still be a pragmatist." By the time he wrote the preface to *Meaning of Truth*, in the summer of 1909, the relation was a bit cozier: "it seems to me that the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail." (MT, 6) Further on in the same preface, he wrote: "The pragmatist view…of the truth-relation is that it has a definite content, and that everything in it is experienceable. Its whole nature can be told in positive terms. The 'workableness' which ideas must have, in order to be true, means particular workings, physical or intellectual, actual or possible, which they may set up from next to next inside of concrete experience. Were this pragmatic contention admitted, one great point in the victory of radical empiricism would also be scored, for the relation between an object and the idea that truly knows it,

Though James never gave the technical explication of his *Weltanschauung*, we can reconstruct facets of his radical empiricism, the ideas which gave it its plausibility for James (thus motivating his adherence to it), as well as the ideas which 'flesh it out'. James wrote in 1910 that his philosophy "remained unfinished, like an arch built on only one side." (Quoted in *Some Problems of Philosophy*, preface.) I believe that while James was right that more technical explication remained to be done, the major building blocks had been in place for a long time. I hope to show that his arch was far more complete than James himself supposed, and that in viewing it, we might see not only James's philosophy, but Wittgenstein's more clearly. I shall attempt only the first of these tasks in this chapter.

The simile of an arch is an apt one: individual 'isms', or positions on specific philosophical quandaries, will be shown to support one another, and I hope to show that however unusual or odd an individual position may be, the totality of James's views are mutually supporting and form a plausible and robust world view. It is the whole that clarifies the parts, in the end, and this requires a synthetic, rather than an analytic approach to interpretation.

The analytic technique of commentators on James began in his own lifetime, with Lovejoy and Russell perhaps being the best examples of intelligent and (for the most part) sympathetic expositors trying to understand James by conceptual dissection. Their efforts, while not without their use, have led to misunderstanding and disparaging of James's philosophical views. Like vivisection, they display the parts at the expense of their functioning as part of a living whole. Owen Flanagan, Richard Rorty, and Richard Gale also employ this technique.[6]

Radical empiricism, as described by James in 1909, is a rather simple position. "Radical empiricism consists first of a postulate, next of a statement of fact, and finally of a generalized conclusion." This is James's account of the view in his introduction to *The Meaning of Truth*, which was in part to resuscitate the view after his comments in *Pragmatism*. His three points were simply:

> The postulate is that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience. (Things of an unexperienceable nature may exist *ad libitum*, but they form no part of the material for philosophic debate.)
> The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves.

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is held by rationalists to be nothing of this describable sort, but to stand outside of all possible temporal experience; and on the relation, so interpreted, rationalism is wonted to make its last most obdurate rally."

[6] A. O. Lovejoy, *The Thirteen Pragmatisms and Other Essays*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963); B. Russell, "William James's conception of truth" (originally entitled "Transatlantic Truth") in *Philosophical Essays* (Allan & Unwin, 1966); O. Flanagan, "Consciousness as a Pragmatist Sees It" in R. A. Putnam, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to William James* (CUP 1997); R. Rorty, *The Consequences of Pragmatism* (University of Minnesota Press, 1982); R. Gale, *op. cit.*

> The generalized conclusion is that therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure. (MT, 6-7)

Pure Experience: *Übersicht*

The metaphysical theory of pure experience and what we could call James's methodological stance of radical empiricism together form what James at the time called his *Weltanschauung*, which in 1905 was very much an overt mixture of personal and more doctrinal commitments. This 'philosophy' would seem unnecessarily idiosyncratic and implausible without consideration of some of the concomitant ideas that buttress James's central picture. With due apologies for relying on labels and 'isms', we may enumerate the relevant notions thusly:

1) **Holism**: James exemplifies a position familiar in our own time, but he does so in remarkably diverse ways. We shall see him taking the basic notion that an entity under investigation must be understood in a context or system and applying it to knowledge and language, as well as the stream of thought and its components, such as habits, reflexes and memories. He was also a neural holist, which gives his use of this notion some grounding in physiology. James also applied holism to his views on particular psychological issues, like the relation of perception to conceptualization, as well as to the methodology of psychology itself. James was a holist in a very broad sense.

2) **Pragmatism**: This familiar position of James's will turn out to rely upon his holism, and will in turn provide naturalistic accounts of much of mental life. The importance of verification—a potential link for comparing Wittgenstein and James—will help explain James's functional view of concepts, language, and behaviour. The pragmatic method as a means of alleviating doubt, and especially as eliminating useless problems will be seen to emerge from this basic account of habits, functions and other relations between a thinker and his or her situation. Pragmatism also freed James from traditional representation theories of knowledge, which allows him to meet many of the challenges also posed by Wittgenstein in *Investigations*, as he turned against his own 'picture theory' of meaning.

3) **Functional Nominalism**: James offered a genetic account of concepts, in an attempt to explain their coming to be in the natural world. This account does not, contrary to some forms of nominalism, eliminate universals or abstract concepts. Rather, particular concepts are construed as the basis out of which such tools are fashioned. This is a form of 'semantic pluralism' as well as an example of pragmatism at work. James's view of concepts as tools, as well as his fashioning a 'tertium quid' between traditional nominalism and conceptual realism, are noteworthy. Here the distinction between perception and conception (which is constitutive of higher-level consciousness) will be explored.

4) **Psychologism**: In isolation from the developments occurring in symbollic logic, James boldly asserted what has since been characterized as anathema. He argued for a theory of logical relations and inference that was grounding in psychology, rather than viewing logic as separate from it. His account of a priori truths, based on his nominalism and pragmatism, will appear very different from the sorts of views attacked by 'anti-psychologist' theories of logic such as found in the *Tractatus*.

5) **Agnostic Phenomenalism**: Chapter one illustrated how James eradicated certain 'interior' or 'private' aspects of consciousness, in favour of a neutral, radically empiricist view. Doing to mind what Berkely did to matter constitutes an 'agnostic' form of phenomenalism. This is distinct from traditional phenomenalist accounts, (including Berkeley's subjective approach) for, in eliminating the mental realm as a substrate for phenomenal experience, idealism is removed from view. In its absence we have 'a world of pure experience'.

6) **Pluralism** and an **Indeterminate universe**: One of the reasons James's *Weltanschauung* is poorly described by terms like 'neutral monism' is that it is not, strictly speaking, a monism. James's view was of a universe with an indefinite and varied collection of constituents; furthermore, his was an 'unfinished' universe, as he insisted events such as human actions substantively added to the universe, or as he sometimes called it, the 'pluriverse.'

I want to suggest that these positions, so frequently studied in isolation from one another, condition or shape one another, with the goal of a naturalistic metaphysics as James's intention. By stressing the complexity and reality of relations in the world, and our hedonic (or pragmatic) selecting of aspects of the phenomena experienced, James hoped to provide a view of the world of change, where knowledge was possible, the laws of logic make sense, and the origin as well as the function of our ideas can be explained. To expropriate a phrase of Wittgenstein's, it is an attempt to describe 'the world as we find it'[7].

(1) The Varieties of Holism

The rationale for discussing holisms

It is perhaps in epistemology that James's holism is most well known. In his insistence that we attend to a belief's context and the situation in which a belief can be verified, James sounds a theme familiar to us today. This kind of holism is discussed by Isaac Nevo in "Continuing Empiricist Epistemology: Holistic Aspects in James's Pragmatism" (*Monist* 75(4), pp. 458-476). In Nevo's view, James was a holist, but not a linguistic holist in the manner of Quine. Nevo's work is a resuscitation of the pragmatist reputation for holism, and somewhat of a rejoinder to Quine, who credits much of the holistic reshaping of empiricism to

his own work.[8] Putnam's explication of Jamsian holism in "The Permanence of William James" *Pragmatism: An Open Question*, (1995), makes a similar point. The basic depiction of James seems to be in accord with much of naturalized epistemology, and holism in this context is supposed to be a bulwark against skepticism. While I will discuss James's epistemological holism, I am arguing for a somewhat larger application of the concept 'holism' to James than has been customary.

The holistic aspects of James's philosophy are numerous and interwoven. The forms of holism he endorses are the means by which James connects the various sub-theories of his philosophical view, which is perhaps unsurprising. Description of the ways James puts holism to work is useful for our purposes, as past commentators have treated this topic rather briefly[9], and given the traditional history of Wittgenstein's work as emergent from the logical atomism of Russell, this detail is necessary for establishing a case for the later Wittgenstein as holist.

James's holism regarding beliefs and mental states is fairly well known (see section 2, below, for the former; the latter was discussed in chapter one, pp. 49-64.). An early chapter in *Principles* was devoted to demolishing the so-called 'mind-dust' theory of classical empiricists, and thus the notion that mental states have discrete components. Simply put, James denied that states of consciousness have an atomic structure. They could not, he argued, be analyzed by psychologists into minute, unperceived 'bits' of conscious experience. In so doing, James committed himself to a rather strong characterization of the stream of thought as essentially unified; thoughts, even thoughts of complex objects, were simple unities and were not susceptible to analysis. Five years after the publication of *Principles*, James retracted this claim in "The Knowing of Things Together", stating that it was possible for the psychologist to isolate parts of a thought, but that this enterprise embroiled psychology in metaphysical and epistemological quandaries that he had hoped to avoid in his earlier work.[10]

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[7] This phrase is Wittgenstein's. See *Tractatus*, 5.631

[8] "The Pragmatists' Place in Empiricism" in R. J. Mulvaney and P. M. Zeltner, (ed) *Pragmatism: Its Sources and Prospects* (Columbia, SC: University of Carolina Press, 1981) pp. 21-39.

[9] Two book-length treatments, however, do exist: William Gavin's *William James and the Reinstatement of the Vague*, (Temple UP, 1992) and Charlene Haddock-Seigfried's *Chaos and Context* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1978).

[10] In recent years, much has been made of this change of heart: Richard Gale, among others, uses the 1895 address as evidence that the *Principles* could not possibly be taken as of a piece with James's radical empiricism. John McDermott and Ignas Skrupskelis also point to this as a momentus shift in James's views. Gale's primary concerns seem to be that the *Principles* is a dualistic treatise pure and simple, and the further belief that while radical empiricism was James's mature view, the metaphysics of pure experience was a momentary and doomed experiment of James's circa 1904-5. 'While W. E. Cooper [1990] more than adequately handles the first of thesemisinterpretations (though Gale was not among his targets), I have offered some tentative criticisms of the second idea in "Divide and Conquer: Richard Gale's Reading of William James" (unpublished).

Alongside the criticism of mind-dust theories[11] (which James correctly identified as a resurgence of Leibnizian monads), James's other major criticism of the empiricism of his day effected a move toward holism. He frequently criticized the existing view of sensations as discrete representations held before the mind, turning them on their head to make them the product, not the raw material, of perceptual processing. Thus we see him write at 461:

> The 'simple impression' of Hume, the 'simple idea' of Locke are both abstractions, never realized in experience. Experience, from the very first, presents us with concreted objects, vaguely continuous with the rest of the world which envelops them in space and time, and potentially divisible into inward elements and parts.

This is in James's discussion of "Discrimination and Comparison", two cognitive abilities that loom large in James's overall view. In this section we encounter one of James's more famous passages, where he describes the raw material of cognition in terms very friendly to his later 'pure experience' account. Against naïve empiricism, James argues that a newborn baby, or someone whose normal discriminative powers have been disrupted, will not be able to fashion experience into a useable form. A true *tabula rasa* will be cognitively impotent. Even our physiology is insufficient to organize experience on its own; that is, the fact that different senses convey stimuli via different afferent pathways does not solve matters. "The baby" James writes:

> assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin, and entrails at once, feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing confusion; and to the very end of life, our location of all things in one space is due to the fact that the original extents or bignesses of all the sensations which came to our notice at once, coalesced together into one and the same space. There is no other reason than this why "the hand I touch and see coincides spatially with the hand I immediately feel." (462)

The body must not only be equipped to deal with stimuli, but these stimuli (which, along with previous training and associated responses, are collectively called 'experience'[12] by James) must 'come at us' in a continuous way. Without such continuity, such continuous contact with an environment, we could make nothing of sensations. This is a major modification of the received view of empiricism: experience does not come in 'impressions' or 'sensations', these are constructs or distillations made from a more diverse, robust, and manifold world of, if you like, 'raw input'. The powers of the mind to discriminate and re-arrange experience are crucial to our coping with the environment, and to our eventual self-consciousness;

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[11] 'Mind dust' accounts of conscious states were common in James's time. Simply put, it is an atomic model of consciousness, where individually-conscious 'bits' cohere to form a larger whole. This is usually thought to entails panpsychism (the view that all matter is conscious). James rejected the view with a barrage of arguments in *Principles*, chapter six. Here we need only record its clash with his holism.

[12] To witness James's further refinements of this tentative account of 'experience', see his criticism of Herbert Spencer, discussed below at p. 119.

however, our continuous interaction with the 'outside world', which according to James does not come in any preordained form[13], is necessary for the emergence of mind in the familiar sense.

Neural holism and plasticity

Less well known is James's holism regarding neurology. Not only did he hold the reticular theory popular in the physiology of the day, but in rejecting the "Maynert scheme"[14] of cerebral specialization, he affirmed a holistic view of how the brain processes information. His was a mediate view, allowing that the brain shows regional specialization (Broka's and Wernicke's areas (also called the anterior and posterior speech cortexes, respectively) were well known in 1890, and James discusses the various types of aphasia that may result from damage to different areas of the brain), but insisting that biological evidence (see *Principles*, 84-5) supports the view that tasks are widely distributed throughout the central nervous system. James cited experimental evidence in this matter: an organism was deprived of its cortical regions, and it was found that life could be sustained by the mid- and hindbrain areas. This view is even more widely held today, after a century's detailed examination of the regions of the brain. The role of the cerebellum, for example, has been renovated by modern neurology. The basic picture of hierarchical brain analogy makes the cerebellum look somewhat like a vestigial tail, an evolutionary throwback with little use in the modern organism. However, the consensus today is that this part of the brain performs enormously important (and highly complicated) tasks sorting or ordering neural activity from all over the brain (particularly the processing of sensory and motor signals), for which its relatively inflexible and old-fashioned structure well suits it.[15]

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[13] James would later characterize his view of experience as that of a 'quasi-chaos', admitting that, far from being totally irregular, experience did in fact exhibit similarities and other connections we could usefully attend to, though they might admit of multifarious conceptualizations. ("A World of Pure Experience", ERE, 33n6.)

[14] The Meynert scheme is simply the view that, concerning sensory and motor acts, the organism naviagtes its environment via the successful functioning in parallel of these discrete mechanisms. Furthermore, these processes were not only discrete with respect to one another, but with respect to the rest of the brain. James's criticsm was one of detail, for he thought "that the scheme probably makes the lower centres too machine-like and the hemispheres not quite machine-like enough" (39) James and his contemporaries were handicapped by the level of resolution of their mapping of the brain: the motor and somatosensory corteces lie next to one another in a pair of narrow strips traversing the top of the cerebrum, and thus they are difficult to isolate experimentally. However, neurologists at that time had little trouble separating the pair of them from the rest of the brain, hence their conclusions. James was sceptical, and at 73 he states his view more clearly: the centres act as "the mouth of the funnel, as it were, through which the stream of innervation, starting from elsewhere, pours[.]" James's views have held up well to the present day: the contemporary consensus is that while a large degree of localization occurs in the brain, functions are widely distributed and interdependent.

[15] However, it is always in the nature of progress to appear greater than it is: the view that the cerebellum did something useful for the organism can be found as far back as 1664, when physician Thomas Willis speculated that this part of the brain might be responsible for automatic motions, freeing up the brain for what he called 'spontaneous motions'. Susan Greenfield mentions this in *The Human Brain: A Guided Tour*, pp. 38-9. The tasks hypothesized to be the province of the cerebellum today are more varied, but the principle is the same.

The cerebellum is not a particularly flexible structure: it is a complex but rigid system within the brain. Perhaps it comes as no surprise that the tasks it handles are 'automatic' actions, and do not enter into conscious life. Plasticity bears some relation to mentality, according to James, and modern psychology has followed him on this. The 'lower' parts of the brain (the spinal cord, brain stem, the pons, the medulla, etc.) perform regulative functions like cardiac function and the endocrine system, while it is mostly the cerebral cortex that handles matters we recognize as related to mental life. In between there are 'semi-reflex' acts and instincts, which do not enter consciousness, or if they do, they do so marginally or as the result of specific training.

James took this idea that the brain operates systematically (hence talk of the nervous system replaces mention of the brain in well-worded discussions of neurophysiology) and extended it to metaphysics. In his view epistemology, ontology, and semantics were to be subjected to a holistic approach. In a world of pure experience, the continuity of experience is crucial, and James takes it as self-evident. His *Manuscript Essays and Notes* are peppered with remarks on the continuity of experience, how it 'hangs together' temporally and spatially. His remarks linking pragmatism to radical empiricism in *The Meaning of Truth* (reproduced above) mention continuity as a native feature of experience.

In his chapter "Habit", James discusses the notion of plasticity, which plays an important role in his psychology. Plasticity, he suggests, is a ubiquitous property of nervous tissue, but we also see this feature elsewhere in the world: scars, wounds, even some artifacts (violin) show plasticity. (110-1)[16] There is no hard and fast distinction, from the neurologist's point of view, between voluntary actions, habitual ones, instincts and reflexes, right on down to those things that are out of our purview as agents. The hemispheres are partly mechanical, the lower centers more plastic than we think. Neural holism encourages us to see the whole brain contributing to its various tasks, and blurs the distinction between the free and the determined. (For more on habit, see section two, below.) This mixture of holistic neurology and holistic philosophy of mind is one example of James's 'cerebralism': the view that mind and brain must be studied in conjunction, as two parts of an interactive system. W. E. Cooper characterizes James's cerebralism in terms of 'simultaneous nomic equivalence', a weak form of interactionism.[17]

A Tentative Dualism

One might object to this holistic portrayal of James, asking 'Isn't the *Principles*, after all, a model of dualist psychology?' Doesn't that work assume a world of physical objects and ideas that copy them? On the

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[16] James's technique here bears similarity with Edelman's discussion of memory. See chapter one.
[17] Cooper's statement of the theory—itself an interesting *tertium quid* between parallelism and identity theories—can be found in "William James's Theory of Mental Causation" *Transactions of the Charles S.*

surface this would seem to be the case. However, the dualism of the *Principles* needs to be understood in its proper context. It is (to borrow Cooper's phrase) a 'methodological' dualism only.[18] Consider James's talk of the psychologist's attitude towards the phenomenon of cognition, and the tentative nature of dualism therein:

> *[The psychologist's attitude] is a thoroughgoing dualism.* It supposes two elements, mind knowing and thing known, and treats them as irreducible. Neither gets out of itself or into the other, neither in any way *is* the other, neither *makes* the other[19]. They just stand face to face in a common world, and one simply knows, or is known unto, its counterpart. This singular relation is not to be expressed in any lower terms, or translated into any more intelligible name. Some sort of *signal* must be given by the thing to the mind's brain, or the knowing will not occur—we find as a matter of fact that the mere *existence* of a thing outside the brain is not a sufficient cause for our knowing it: it must strike the brain in some way, as well as be there, to be known. But the brain being struck, the knowledge is constituted by a new construction that occurs altogether *in* the mind. The thing remains the same whether known or not. And when once there, the knowledge may remain there, whatever becomes of the thing. (214-5)

However, regarding James's dualism above, this is a good example of James speaking qua non-metaphysical psychologist, and this has been the source of much confusion in James scholarship.[20] According to Cooper, we can successfully ascribe a 'two levels' view to James, where his psychological comments can reflect a *pro forma* commitment to philosophical positions that he officially (*qua* philosopher) eschewed. (See Cooper [1990 and forthcoming].) At the level of scientific investigation, psychology may take the existence of the agent and world uncritically, working within the dualism then current. But James's personal misgivings find expression in a second, metaphysical 'level' of investigation. This reading of the *Principles*, where James adopts a 'provisional dualism' in order to speak to a broader audience, implies that James had a pluralist metaphysical position during the period of the book's composition, and the documentary evidence bears this out. Cooper's 'reconciling view' explains why the *Principles* may appear to be simultaneously a work of behaviourism and one of introspection, at times positivistic and metaphysical at others. James's scepticism about dualism explains his frequent raising of questions that undermine dualism's plausibility. Finally, if James did speak in different tones

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Peirce Society, 30(2) [1994]). The term 'simultaneous nomic equivalence' derives from the work of Alvin Goldman.

[18] W. E. Cooper, "William James's Theory of Mind" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28(4), [1990] pp. 571-593. The term occurs at 580.

[19] This appears to be the opposite of Hilary Putnam's view, where his internal realism is described as "The mind and world jointly make up the mind and world." (*Reason, Truth and History*, p. xi). Interestingly, he re-christens his internal realism in *The Many Faces of Realism*, where he writes: "I should have called it pragmatic realism!" He explicitly identifies himself as continuing a neo-Kantian tradition, which includes James, Husserl and Wittgenstein as its most prominent members.

[20] The confusion is hard to fathom, given James's unsubtle hint shortly after his 'endorsement' of dualism: "The dualism of Object and Subject and their pre-established harmony are what the psychologist must assume, whatever ulterior monistic philosophy he may, as an individual who has the right also to be a metaphysician, have in reserve." (216) *Cf.* his remarks in the preface, p. 6.

throughout the book, this might give the hypothesis that Wittgenstein did not read him well some additional support.

Cooper (*ibid.*) also coins a useful term for a recurring technique of James's: he describes James as using his 'shoehorn' in much the same manner as Occam's razor. The point, Cooper argues, is to maximize ontological parsimony. Shoehorning puts 'odd' qualities into percepta rather than in the mind or some transexperiential entity. Most importantly, the shoehorning of 'self' (or the feeling of being owned) into experiences themselves, allows one to get rid of the notion of an Ego 'behind' phenomena.[21] (Also at Cooper 575). Cooper gives as a further example James's 'shoehorning' the quale of a third dimension into our visual perceptions, which James does indeed do in *Principles* chapter XX. Another important example of this technique, as I have argued above, is James's placement of feelings of relation, continuity, *etc.*, into the flux of experience, thus solving a traditional empiricist's problem by shoving the quality in question (in this case, the quality of perceptions' 'hanging together' to form a coherent world-picture) into the sensory data itself.[22] This was not an *ad hoc* move, but rather, an appeal to the phenomenological data: experience just has the qualities James imputes, and thus his shoehorning is really a restoration of what had been wrested from its domain by earlier, less observant empiricists.

Motives and Convictions

It is worth noting James's motives for his wide use of holism throughout his career: the primary reason for his holism was most likely his desire to avoid 'gaps' like the traditional mind/body problem, and the gap between knower and known, a sign and the object it signifies. His hostility towards transcendent entities, or indeed any appeal to relations between what is immanent to human experience and what is transcendent of it, was a guiding impulse in psychology as well as in philosophy. This general attitude of James's manifests itself in his holism regarding philosophy itself – he regularly refuses to compartmentalize problems (as Russell and the young Wittgenstein did, leaving matters for later solution.) Hence the topic of this chapter is an overall demonstration of a kind of James's holism, *viz.*, the creation of an integrated, mutually supporting system of beliefs. The opposite (and arguably more influential) view can be found in Frege: "In order to avoid any misunderstanding and prevent the blurring of the boundary between psychology and logic, I assign to logic the task of discovering the laws of truth, not the laws of taking things to be true or of thinking."[23] The Fregean legacy of 'anti-psychologism' is important to keep in mind,

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[21] The converse of this shoehorn is noted in passing by Cooper at 575: by making privacy, innerness, features of a higher-order form consciousness, James can effectively circumvent the problem of other minds, knowledge of external world, etc., as 'constructed problems' (*i.e*, we're not cut of from the world *ab ovo*, but after building up our ontology in a certain way.)

[22] I claim no originality on this point: in addition to Cooper, John J. McDermott and Christine Haddock-Seigfried emphasize this aspect of James's view of relations. Of course, it is plainly stated by James himself in his 'statement of fact' (above, p. 90.)

[23] "Thoughts", in Frege, *Logical Investigations*, trans. P. Geach, p. 2

in order to understand Wittgenstein's shift towards holism, and his increasing convergence with James's point of view.

It is safe to say that this jumble of holisms is (*pace* Quine) James's major modification to empiricism: he frequently criticizes earlier empiricists for their atomism, and sought to employ the system-oriented approach he saw in the biological sciences as a solution. Still, this may escape the casual observer. While 'radical empiricism' and 'pragmatism' appear frequently in James's writings, the term 'holism' does not. The term is an anachronism, but accurate nonetheless. James calls experience (as found or given) a 'plenum' throughout his career.[24] As for the earlier errors of empiricist thinkers, James blames language for atomistic drift of our thought (*Principles*, 230). His insistence on the importance of continuity (seen in *Principles* in his account of feelings of tendency and the dim perception of 'fringe' relations) is a recurrent and often overlooked feature of his writing.

Given the stress James put on feelings of tendency, desires, and habits, it is not surprising that his philosophical view would place a premium on relations and relational terms. In his foreword to Charlene Haddock-Seigfried's *Chaos and Context*, John McDermott calls James's theory of relations his "most important philosophical contention" (ix), and highlights how his holism implies radical empiricism. (See also his introduction to *The Writings of William James*, pp. xlvi – xlix.) This focus on relations also dissolves the familiar division between logic and psychology. (See below, section 4.) Biology also figures in to this situation as well, for much of James's holistic impulse can be seen as a borrowing from his early experiences in field biology and nerve physiology. For James, logic could not be divorced from the science of the mind (indeed, he noted the normativity underlying both logic and epistemology, and insisted that the norms of reasoning and cognition must be understood in terms of human ends and desires.)[25]

The upshot of all these ideas is that meaning, perception and thought are dynamic processes, and must be approached as such by the psychologist or philosopher. For James it also meant that the cognitive and normative could not be clearly separated. A further, metaphilosophical consequence of a holistic view of mental states is the conclusion that language is in some way inadequate when it comes to conveying experience. But this, too, is a complex matter. While James blamed empiricists for their excessive attention to names and other substantive parts of language, he also saw unharvested nuance: "Philosophy has always turned on grammatical particles. With, near, next, like, from, towards, against, because, for, through, my—these words designate types of conjunctive relations arranged in a roughly ascending order of intimacy and inclusiveness." ("A World of Pure Experience", ERE 24.) This, I would argue, fuelled James's dream of a psychological vocabulary that would surmount dualistic equivocation and ambiguities.

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[24] *Principles*, 1231. See also "Reflex Action and Theism" [1881] (cited in the former at 1232). *A Pluralistic Universe* [1909] concludes with a similar exposition. In *Some Problems of Philosophy* [1911], the terms 'flux' and 'sensible continuum' are preferred. (See chapter four of the latter.)

Holism involves all these things: the importance of continuity, the function of relations, the unity of consciousness, the merging of fact and value, and the need to attend to situation or context. Often overlooked in James's rhetoric is a subtler point about the world: if things are joined together in the fashion he suggests, learning about them in all their detail will be more difficult than previous thinkers suspected. This underwrites Peirce's fallibilism, though the dialectical and subjective aspects of James's view clearly displeased the former.

We can, finally, enumerate the great variety of holistic theses held by James. There is the neural holism that implies that neural events occur as a system, and thus isolation of single neural events is scientifically unfruitful. We may talk of his holism regarding the science of psychology, which underscores the importance of utilizing both experimental and introspective methods, and which demands of the psychologist that she consider her subject as linked to biology and physiology, and thus connects psychological accounts to questions about the past, adaptive and present, functional situations. There is what might be called perceptual or even 'ideational' holism, where things perceived in the stream of thought are connected by experienced continuity and other felt relations. There is also James's holistic approach to philosophy, where he felt the need to fashion a complete *Weltanschauung*, an 'arch' where the various specific theses of his philosophy would 'hang together'. Finally, James was (as I hope to show) a holist about both meaning and truth: he construed semantics in terms of speakers in a context uttering words whose meaning was determined by examination of the context of utterance as a whole, especially their conditions of confirmation. Sentences mean what they do, and true sentences are true, in virtue of the relations they bear to their 'environment'.

Conclusion: The Effects of the Holistic Tinge

Holism is characteristic of James's approach, both as a psychologist and as a philosopher. The notion (or perhaps we should say conviction) that problems or scenarios are richly (indefinitely) complex informs many of his characteristic positions. His description of the 'psychologist's fallacy', his characterization of the stream of thought, his neurology and the theory of the hemispheres as a semi-plastic adaptive network are all expressions of this holistic credo. In philosophy this finds expression in his insistence that concepts are pale imitations and simplifications of robust particular facts, that relations are real and show a diversity that affects our cognition, and that philosophies themselves have rich connections (not only in terms of causation, but of justification and use) with the personalities of their creators and adherents. (Recall that in his famous discussion of 'tough-minded' and 'tender-minded' personalities, each person is said to be a complex mix of the two. No one is to be expected to be simply one or the other.) Much of this can be traced to James's Darwinism, which led him not only to take a biological perspective on philosophical

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[25] See, *e.g.*, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. 85*ff.*; *Pragmatism*, p. 108*ff.*

matters (regarding them as having important 'ecological' relations), but to stress the role of action and modification in response to novelty. It is James the friend of activity, creativity and improvement that most students of philosophy come to know. Most significantly for James's philosophical legacy, it is his pragmatic maxim that stands out as the most original variant on this holistic theme.

(2) Pragmatism

Pragmatism has been variously defined, both during the debates following the publication of James's "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" [1898] and in our own time. Arthur Lovejoy famously enumerated the possible meanings in his essay "The Thirteen Pragmatisms" [1908], and James himself complicated matters by offering various slogans, thematic statements and apparent definitions[26], while simultaneously pointing to friends and colleagues as fellow travelers in the pragmatist stream.[27] Hilary Putnam offers a useful characterization of the movement as a whole:

> Pragmatism has been characterized by antiscepticism: Pragmatists hold that *doubt* requires justification just as much as belief (Peirce drew a famous distinction between "real" and "philosophical" doubt); and by *fallibilism*: Pragmatists hold that there are no metaphysical guarantees to be had that even our most firmly-held beliefs will never need revision. That one can be both fallibilistic *and* antisceptical is perhaps *the* basic insight of American Pragmatism. (Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question*, p. 20-1)

One could go on to add that pragmatism is characterized by an evolutionary outlook, or, as James noted, that the view has affinities with nominalism, utilitarianism and positivism (P 32). Richard Rorty stresses the experimental side of pragmatism, which he gleans from Dewey.[28] But while these terms may jointly suffice to carve out a distinctive niche, it is best to proceed, as James did, in a more colloquial way. We might start by noting that pragmatism is about the growth of knowledge, and that talk of clarifying meaning and verifying purported truths takes place in terms familiar to naturalists and biologists (hence my additional mention of evolution.)

This 'biological' intrusion into epistemology[29] has several aspects: according to pragmatism, certain philosophical problems (the ones not consisting of mere verbal disputes) have causal circumstances worth

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[26] James had a certain hostility to definitions, as he thought them a static 'snapshot' of a dynamic process, *viz.*, the actual use of words in discourse. See *Pragmatism* 42; *cf.* "Two English Critics" in MT.

[27] This led to the famous re-christening of the original notion by Peirce in 1905 as 'pragmaticism', a name, as he put it "which is ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers." The context of Peirce's remarks will make it clear that his beef is with popularizers of the term other than James. See "What Pragmatism Is" in *The Essential Peirce*, 2:335.

[28] See "Pragmatism without method" in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge UP, 1991), where he makes the further claim that outside of philosophy pragmatists tended to exercise their radicalism, while showing a more conservative side within the discipline proper. Rorty and Putnam engaged in a decade-long battle for the mantle of 'inheritor of the pragmatist legacy', though neither thinker gave a characterization of the movement entirely free of their own prejudices and preoccupations.

[29] The connection between evolution and pragmatism is complex. Not only does the former stand as the most likely source of inspiration for James's overall use of holism in philosophy and psychology, in

taking into account, and the attempt to alleviate doubt serves (and in some sense is guided by) needs connected with the life of the thinker in question; they arise from and are solved (if a solution is found) to suit both the character and the environment of the particular philosopher. While some commentators characterized pragmatism in terms of its contrast with empiricism[30], James clearly thought of it as an extension of the basic spirit of empiricism (hence his dedication of the book; *cf.* the debt to Mill expressed elsewhere, e.g., lecture two p. 41) and emphasized its moderate nature[31]. Pragmatism, as explicitly developed by James, was applied to religious questions and matters of what we might call an 'existential nature'.[32] Later, the view was applied more directly to matters concerning the nature of truth. None of these topics are of direct relevance for our current topic, but a few points need to be brought out.

Pragmatism, one might say, has many moments: James uses the theory to make remarks about many different ideas, of which we may construct a brief list. It is about:

- the role of temperament in philosophy
- the goal of philosophy being therapeutic, or psychologically beneficial
- philosophy (*in actu*) as a field plagued with useless problems
- semantics forming an important backdrop to questions of truth
- meaning needing to be tied to concrete verifiability
- knowledge providing a function in life (a navigating or coping function)
- science being instrumentally useful – true 'in so far forth' as it serves our interests
- the anti-imagistic[33] treatment of concepts; despite the fact that we sometimes do use images as aids

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epistemology in particular it deepens the holism of coherence theories of truth and knowledge to include not only collections of beliefs, but non-epistemic considerations such as factual context and individual temperament. However, given James's admiration and citation of Pierre Duhem, Darwin cannot get all the credit for James's holism.

[30] See for example Richard Gale's chapter on pragmatist semantics in *The Divided Self of William James*.

[31] "Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed." The two aspects were subsequently identified as a rejection of abstraction and dogmatic theorizing (the radicalism), and "at the same time it does not stand for any special results." (P 31) It becomes clearer in this and subsequent lectures that materialist and determinist forms of empiricism exhibited the kind of specificity of results James eschewed.

[32] Scholars often think of *Pragmatism* as an epistemological treatise, but a quick glance at the titles of the eight lectures reveals that the primary concerns are what we now call metaphilosophy, and the rationality of various religious beliefs.

[33] The term is borrowed from Russell Goodman (*op. cit.*, p. 347). *Principles*, 933, gives a sense of James's attitude regarding the role of images in thought; his position compares to Descartes's in the *Regulae*, specifically rule 14. While James occasionally characterizes concepts in terms of mental images—Putnam for one considers this a lapse on James's part—he does not claim reasoning is dependent on the entertaining of images before the mind. See, *e.g.*, page two of "Brute and Human Intellect" in *Essays on Psychology*. (It is interesting to note that the instances when James neglects his usual distinction are primarily in his popular lectures, such as the ones presently under consideration.)

- a theory of truth needing to provide a useful analysis of the concept 'truth' as it functions in human interactions, not just empty appeals to 'correspondence' or 'cognitive duty'. (The theory he proposes shows truth to be linked to assent, verifying, and understanding, among other things.)

A great deal has been written about how to interpret pragmatism as the term is used in James's writings. As mentioned, Lovejoy lamented that there was no single, clear idea standing out among all others, and I think this is correct. James seems to have used the term as indicative of a general approach, and as a commendatory term for substantive positions within philosophical sub-disciplines that for him were the fruits of the pragmatic method.[34] *Vis-à-vis* Wittgenstein, a look back at the list above should reveal a broad measure of agreement with James on these issues (the first two are frequently remarked upon by commentators.) I am interested here in showing how, without the aid of Frege's technical innovations, James was capable of formulating a position on epistemology and semantics that would aid his radical empiricism. From there it will be a matter of convergence for James and Wittgenstein: both having a pragmatic approach, their work will move in similar directions.

Habit and Pragmatism

Of all the characterizations of the pragmatic method (in its narrower function—as it pertains to truth) given by James in his many essays and lectures, the one notable in this context might be unfamiliar. In "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth", James argues that for pragmatism, truth may be described as "a leading that is worth while." (P, 98)[35] If we attend to *this* description, rather than the utilitarian-sounding ones most frequently cited, it will be possible to see pragmatism as more closely allied to both the ideas expressed in James's *Principles* and his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. For James, knowledge about a thing was an ability possessed by an agent that enables him or her to manipulate experience to a satisfactory locus. (Such manipulation has rather obvious limits.) Knowing something about a thing enables one to locate it (in some sense), and adjust one's actions in accord with the thing, and our desires regarding it. This ability cannot, in James's view, rest on anything transcendent of the organism's condition, where condition is understood in terms of the conjunction of the organism's constitution and the environment it inhabits. The ability of cognition must be attainable, or otherwise immanent. Thus James

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[34] James describes pragmatism as a method in his second lecture, and gives this notion pride of place over that of pragmatism as a theory of truth, though he goes on to treat that as a legitimate sub-species. The method—which sprang from an attitude James called 'anti-intellectualism'—was described as "the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts." (P: 32) This is an example of James's tendency to coin a potent slogan which unfortunately exaggerates certain features of its target.

[35] Lest this suggestion seem overblown, we may note that he refers to instances of physical navigation as "certainly the originals and prototypes of the truth-process." (*ibid.*) *Cf.* "A Word More About Truth": "[L]eave out that whole notion of *satisfactory working* or *leading* (which is the essence of my pragmatic account) and call truth a static logical relation, independent even of *possible* leadings or satisfactions, and it seems to me you cut all ground from under you." MT, p. 89.

tried in his lectures to explain knowledge, objective reference[36] and *a priori* truths in terms of this basic model of navigation or leading-towards, part of his larger project of giving an 'immanentist' account of relations. (This is another moment for invoking 'James's Shoehorn' à la Cooper: the connections rationalists postulate as acts of judgement become perceived connections in the world, regarding which we can still err, but what was once private and mental gets brought into a public space.)

How we get from ignorance to knowledge is modelled on how we get from one physical location to another. As we build up a sense of location, reacting to signs in the landscape, adjusting our actions habitually to attend to the right features, so do we navigate our more 'conceptual' realms. This links the familiar position of pragmatism with the more unusual view of James's continuity-based phenomenalism.[37] It also deprives the position of much of its radical flavour. Pragmatism involves a kind of epistemological conservatism: we mostly interpret the world via older beliefs.[38] New ones get tested against the old, and against experience. We are habitual, epistemologically speaking. (P: 45) Where pragmatism begins to look less conservative is in its resulting picture of beliefs and truth. Beliefs, even our most ancient ones, display surprising plasticity (47). In this aspect, pragmatism is a progressive theory, replacing a static view of truth and knowledge with a dynamic model. This is expected, if you view knowledge and belief as habits.

Habits from *Principles*, and in Peirce

In his chapter on "Habit", James remarks upon the wide variety of skills and knowledge possessed by the average person, and how this 'know how' functions without the aid of our higher levels of awareness. Regarding the common tendency to work one's way around the house in a habitual manner, he writes:

> Our lower centres know the order of these movements, and show their knowledge by their 'surprise' if the objects are altered so as to oblige the movement to be made in a different way. But our higher thought-centres know hardly anything about the matter. Few men can tell off-hand which sock, shoe, or trousers-leg they put on first. They must first mentally rehearse the act; and even that is often insufficient—the act must by *performed*. So of the questions, Which valve of my double door opens first? Which way does my door swing? etc. I cannot *tell* the answer; yet my *hand* never makes a mistake. (*Principles*, 120)

As the notion is deployed in *Principles*, habit is a central mechanism for an organism's coping with environmental change. The chief psychological virtue of a habit is its economical nature. By making a

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[36] Readers might be surprised how far James went: pragmatic accounts of concepts now familiar from modal and tensed logic are proposed in these popular lectures.

[37] Many commentators have attempted to explore the relation between the phenomenalism of radical empiricism and pragmatism in terms of implication, following James's comments in the preface to *Pragmatism*. The endeavour herein is to uncover the form of support and clarification each lends the other, which leaves open the possibility of embracing either of these positions without the companion view. For a recent attempt along these lines, which moreover has influenced this analysis, see Cooper "Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism" *Inquiry*, 1999 42(3-4), 371-383.

[38] To be precise, the conservatism is in human nature, as James represents it.

reaction habitual, an organism compresses a series of smaller actions into a kind of programme, which can be activated quickly and executed without conscious attention to minute aspects of performance. Thus James characterized habits as the product of a series of conscious actions compressed into a non-conscious response. In learning a series, such as the alphabet, we proceed with the aid of attention, and use sensations to corroborate our movement along the series:

> When the series, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, is being learned, each of these sensations [that accompanies the performance signified by the individual letters] becomes the object of a separate perception by the mind. By it we test each movement, to see if it be right before advancing to the next. We hesitate, compare, choose, revoke, reject, etc., by intellectual means. (120-1)

He accordingly sees the role of sensations as having been pushed to the margins of consciousness, or sublimated, to use an anachronistic term. As learning occurs, the felt character of the series is altered: "In habitual action…the only impulse which the centres of idea or perception need send down is the initial impulse, the command to *start*.…[I]t may be a thought of the first movement or of the last result, or a mere perception of some of the habitual conditions of the chain." (121) James goes on to argue that the very fact that our attention may be on another matter shows that habitual actions, once triggered, may be executed without the management of consciousness.

Habits as a whole display a range of plasticity, variability of performance, and capacity for change via learning. This is to be expected, given the seat of the phenomenon: a complex organism like a human being displays a dizzying array of habits, a reflection of the human capacity for flexible interaction with varied environments. Moreover, habits are not distinct psychological entities. They form part of a continuum of behaviour the psychologist studies, each form having its role in the overall function of the organism. James portrays reflexes, instincts, habits and volitions as continuous with one another. Indeed, the typical learning of infancy sees most humans gain voluntary control over involuntary actions, and some reflexes replacing others over time.[39] Habits involve the 'internalization' of a series of actions, into a single, fluid response. Thus, the contemporary term, 'motor programme' is a prime example of what James meant by 'habit'. Deeply ingrained motor programmes tied to specific stimuli are reflexes, which are simply habitual actions taking place without conscious volition or attention. Reflexes, like other actions, also exhibit long-term plasticity, and are a widespread feature of animal life.[40] Habits can be learned or

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[39] James also talk of a larger genus of neurological reaction, the so-called 'reflex-type', which he employs in his psychological writings. See James's general description at *Principles*, 25. On volunatary actions as involving series of actions best classed as reflexes, see his 'ideo-motor' theory of volition in chapter XXVI of *Principles*.

[40] James often talked of the 'reflex-arc' phenomenon, which was in his time a major breakthrough in psychology. By this term James seems to have meant what is now known as 'sensori-motor arc', an idea that still occupies a significant place in experimental psychology. It is still taken to be the basic functional unit of the nervous system.

innate, inflexible or modifiable. While James treated the term to a wide range of applications in psychology, credit lies elsewhere for its introduction into epistemology.

The view that beliefs are habits shaping our actions comes from Peirce: the purpose of thought is the elimination of doubt.[41] The resting-place of thought is belief, which may be said to be the goal or product of thought. "And what, then, is belief?…First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a *habit*."[42] He continues, "The *final* upshot of thinking is the exercise of volition, and of this thought no longer forms a part; but belief is only a stadium of mental action, an effect upon our nature due to thought, which will influence future thinking." Treating belief as a habit, or as a more-or-less internalized rule guiding action gives pragmatism its distinctive twist. Theoretical or abstract knowledge becomes seen as a special case of practical knowledge.

Peirce links knowledge to action, and the sense of a proposition to its experiential consequences. "The essence of belief is the establishment of a habit, and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise." (*Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.) Peirce's main concern was therapeutic and extirpative: he hoped to eliminate fruitless metaphysical debates from philosophy and clear a path for scientific investigation. While he did allow for some ethical and aesthetic considerations to influence such matters, he bridled at James's suggestion that personal preferences or other idiosyncratic desiderata play an important role in the genesis of true beliefs. James, however, while citing on the one hand instances where our choices are tightly constrained by our conservative nature as knowers and by exigent facts, insisted that when confronted with 'momentous' decisions, pragmatism sanctioned our 'right to believe' what proved most beneficial for individual flourishing. Peirce's antipathy towards James's tolerant brand of pragmatism can in part be credited due to the former's famous view of the 'end of inquiry', where convergence of opinion supplants the chaos of real epistemic communities. It need hardly be said that given the corollary of this view—that individuality would disappear as all knowers shared the same total set of beliefs—that James could not have embraced such a vision. He did, however, tolerate an *abstract* version of Peirce's ideal end-of-inquiry, as a heuristic principle.[43]

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[41] This is a view James echoed in *Principles*, specifically in chapter XXI, "The Perception of Reality". James's declaration in *Pragmatism* that 'belief is a rule [habit] for action' occurs at 28-29. This is where James gives his summary of Peirce, which strangely omits the word habit from the original account. (One may speculate that, given that a promient topic in this lecture is breaking the "inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers" (41), James sought to avoid the word in relation to his proposals.) *Cf.* James's 1879 view of belief and action: "The Sentiment of Rationality", where he claims, "[c]ognition, in short, is incomplete until discharged in act." (WB, p. 72.) The longer version of the essay appears in *Essays in Philosophy*.

[42] "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" [1878], *The Essential Peirce*, 1:129.

[43] See *Pragmatism*, p. 106-7 . For a look at Peirce's vision of the 'end of individuality' see Peirce, "Man's Glassy Essence" in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 1, and John Lachs "Peirce: Inquiry as Social Life" in

While mention of habit in *Pragmatism* may have been somewhat muted, in "Humanism and Truth" [1904] James explicitly links—via habit—the epistemic and hedonic features of cognition:

> "[A]re not both our need of such consistency [between our responses and stimuli] and our pleasure in it conceivable as outcomes of the natural fact that we are beings that do develop mental *habits*—habit itself proving adaptively beneficial in an environment where the same objects, or the same kinds of objects, recur and follow 'law'? If this were so, what would have come first would have been the collateral profits of habit as such, and the theoretic life would have grown up in aid of these. In point of fact, this seems to have been the probable case." (MT, 58)

This notion of the pleasure we take in knowledge was a source of consternation for many of James's critics, aside from Peirce. But James was clear that most scientific inquiries, like judicial ones, aim to rise above purely subjective satisfactions (though the subjective drive retains an important motivating function in the form of curiosity.) The ethical upshot of this jurisprudential analogy should not be overlooked: our beliefs are on the whole only credible 'in so far forth' as we have been above reproach in our investigations.

James discusses three competing forces in the modification of knowledge: the surrounding facts (present experience, or 'local' experiential consequences), existing beliefs ('old knowledge', 'common sense'), and our present desires and interests. This last feature is the most popular target of critics, but it must be understood to be a minor player in the vast majority of epistemic situations. In a garden-variety case of searching for knowledge, a subject experiences an interruption in the normal flow of experience, *viz.*, doubt or uncertainty. This is the cause of thought, whose purpose is the alleviation of the doubt and the restoration of activity. Only in rare cases does this third criterion determine the course of belief: the normal push and pull between evidence and previous opinion means it is these two that usually dominate the field. This is presented in lecture two, "What Pragmatism Means," as well as in the substance of lectures five ("Pragmatism and Common Sense") and six ("Pragmatism's Conception of Truth"). New beliefs must 'run the gauntlet' of the collection of preexistent beliefs (P 43).

In the case of 'momentous' questions like the attitude one should adopt towards the universe as a whole, or the values that should shape one's actions, the role of the three 'inputs' to consider is somewhat different, though the basic pragmatic picture remains the same. Philosophical problems[44] have causes, and serve needs (psychologically they are instances of the same mental fact: doubt); they arise from and are solved to

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Rosenthal, Hausman and Anderson, eds., *Classical American Pragmatism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).)

[44] Looking over James's many essays, we see he returns to a family of concerns: the constitution of reality, and how it is possible to know it, freedom of the will and the possibility of self-improvement, the reality of evil and whether one can overcome it, knowledge of what it means to be aware, and whether this awareness transcends our death. In this respect, James's basic philosophical concerns were not unlike Kant's. The latter's famous questions (What may I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope? What is man?) reflect James's perspective rather well.

suit the environment of the particular philosopher. However, in the case of metaphysical issues, the role of evidence is one of 'underdetermination', likewise for received beliefs. In special cases like these, where the impact of adopting a belief is strongly linked to one's individual characteristics, we are presented with the need to choose.[45] Hilary and Ruth-Anna Putnam describe this moment of pragmatism, highlighting its link to pluralism, and contrasting it with utilitarianism:

> 'Our values—our "demands," as James calls them—cannot…be tested one by one, nor is there an algorithm for comparing and rank-ordering them. (That is why James is not a conventional utilitarian, whatever his debt to Mill.) The most important struggle is not between atomistic or isolated values, but between what James calls "ideals," visions which inform and unite large systems of demands. Individual demands may be unreconcilable, as may ideals. But with ideals there is at least the hope of incorporation in some more inclusive vision. That we should seek to work out the conflicts between our ideals in this way—by seeking more inclusive ones which bring out and preserve what was valuable in the ideals they replace—is a central part of the methodology James recommends to us.' (Putnam and Putnam, "William James's Ideas" in Putnam, *Realism With a Human Face*, p. 224.)

This is the region of application of the pragmatic method familiar to most readers. It is important not to extend this specialized application to mundane epistemic contexts, nor should one take away the impression that the search for a personal 'philosophy' or vision is the sole point of pragmatism. It is a special case, important, surely, for reflective human beings, but insofar as pragmatism aims to provide a more useful account of knowledge and truth—in their origins and functions—philosophical perplexity represents only an interesting species of a larger genus. Though truth is 'what works', James never forgot that specific instances of this working vary widely in their degree of objectivity. Some truths work for everyone, but James could never bring himself to extend that observation categorically.

In James's exposition of just what the pragmatist means by truth's 'working,' he stresses the breadth of impact a new belief may have, how it may constrain or conflict with other beliefs. In clarifying the notion that truth is internally related to 'what would be better for us to believe', James explains that this maxim is invalidated when a belief "incidentally clashes with some other vital belief" (P 43). This appears to be an instance of James's holism at work: beliefs ramify across a body of knowledge, and this colours (or restrains) how we apply the pragmatic maxim. Another passage worth noting emphasizes factual as well as doxastic constraint. Speaking of scientific generalizations James writes: "[I]n the choice of these man-made formulas [for predicting the changes in phenomena] we can not be capricious with impunity any more than we can on the common-sense level. We must find a theory that will *work*; and that means something extremely difficult; for our theory must mediate between all previous truths and certain new experiences. It must derange common sense and previous belief as little as possible, and it must lead to some sensible terminus or other that can be verified exactly." (P 104) This holism might seem adventitious, or even self-serving, were it not for James's view of the relation between habit and belief.

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[45] These are the so-called 'momentous' choices, found in *The Will to Believe* [1897].

The connections between pragmatism and habit may be simply summarized. Given the Peircean notion of beliefs as habits for action, pragmatism encourages us to take an explicitly evolutionary attitude towards belief. The role beliefs play in life is connected with our need to deal with a changing environment: beliefs serve to modify actions, to simplify behaviour in many ways[46], and old beliefs form a repertoire upon which new one may occasionally be grafted. Such change occurs only when doubt arises, and old beliefs fail to alleviate the doubt.

Beliefs have a teleological dimension, that is, their persistence in a knower, or community of knowers, is linked to the fulfilment of desired ends. These may not be explicit. They may be ends long abandoned, but provided there is no obvious collision with present ends, they may survive. Given the diversity, complexity and subtlety of human ends, it should come as no surprise that pragmatism offers no more than a method for understanding the function of belief and meaning of truth. It does not offer a single criterion for separating the good from the bad.

Cash or Credit: Saltatory versus Ambulatory Truths.

James's talk of 'cash-value' was a well-chosen metaphor. In addition to reminding his readers of pragmatism's imperative to attend to the use of language (and the corresponding link between belief and human interests), the economic metaphor served to underscore the role of beliefs in situations where experiential confirmation was itself impractical.[47] Indirect verification, or verification 'on credit', was an important addition to pragmatism's theory of 'truth-making'. James is often criticized for being unduly subjective, even solipsistic, in his radical empiricism, with Dewey frequently being touted as a more rounded (because more openly intersubjective) pragmatist. Such critics tend to downplay the social character of James's economic metaphors. Yet consider James here: "All human thinking gets discursified; we exchange ideas; we lend and borrow verifications, get them from one another by means of social intercourse. All truth thus gets verbally built out, stored up, and made available for every one. Hence, we must *talk* consistently just as we must *think* consistently: for both in talk and thought we deal with kinds. Names are arbitrary, but once understood they must be kept to." (P: 105) This passage, in addition to the one they mention, may have inspired the Putnams to claim that James had anticipated Wittgenstein's so-

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[46] This simplification is effected in much the same way a motor programme simplifies locomotion. Just as learning how to throw a baseball (*i.e.*, developing the ball-throwing action into a habitual action) increases my efficiency on the field, my beliefs about the game, *e.g.*, that a ball in play is going to land in foul territory, augment my actual performance. With such a belief I might save myself the effort of chasing down the foul ball, preserving my energy for the next inning.

[47] Those sceptical of the preceding remarks on habit would do well to consult James's remarks on the moral dimensions of habit in *Principles*, p. 126. There he talks about training our habits as a means to "fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund." This is the earliest version of James's 'cash-value' metaphor [1887] that I have located.

called private language argument in his repertoire.[48] James's more familiar claims, *e.g.*, that scientific generalizations and the time-tested beliefs of 'common sense' are just "so much experience *funded*" (*ibid.*, 110), also extend pragmatism beyond simple satisfaction of desires. Just as a poor man cannot print his own money or triple its value to the grocer by stipulation, a knower cannot simply force a belief about what is around the corner to be vindicated.[49]

By the time of writing his defense of pragmatism (specifically, "A Word More About Truth" [1907], and the rejoinder to J. B. Pratt, "Professor Pratt on Truth" [1907], both reprinted in *The Meaning of Truth*), James had utilized another metaphor to flesh out his picture of conceptual knowledge.[50] Truths that allow us to surmount long chains of perceptual verificatory experiences are called 'saltatory truths.' This is in contrast to the 'ambulatory' truths of perceptual fact, where confirmation is right in front of our eyes. (The metaphor is antiquated, but accurate: James is contrasting truths that walk to their goal versus those that 'leap' intermediate experiences.) James give partial sanction to the notion of saltatory truths, as his own view is "ambulatory through and through." (MT, 80) However, he recognizes the occasional use of an abstract conception of knowing, he simply thinks philosophers have historically conceived of knowing as exclusively saltatory. (This was central to his criticism of the notion of correspondence in epistemology: James gives a detailed analysis of the meaning of 'correspondence' and find the narrow definition as a form of 'copying' inadequate, concluding: "To 'agree' in the widest sense with a reality *can only mean to be guided either straight up to it or into its surroundings, or to be put into such working touch with it as to handle either it or something connected with it better than if we disagreed.*" (P, 102)) James made a frequent distinction between abstract depictions of complex functions like knowing, and the 'concrete' portrayal of them, and his battles with philosophers' 'abstractionist' tendencies (also called 'intellectualism' by James) may complicate any attempt to show the balance of James's position. His concrete analysis of knowledge as leading-towards can be seen from his comments in "A Word More About Truth":

> "Cognition, whenever we take it concretely, means determinate 'ambulation,' through intermediaries, from a *terminus a quo* to, or towards, a *terminus ad quem*. As the intermediaries are other than the termini, and connected with them by the usual associative bonds (be these 'external' or be they logical, *i.e.*, classificatory in character,) there would appear to be nothing especially unique about the process of knowing. They fall wholly within experience...." (MT, 81)

The comments in this essay may give the impression that James denied saltatory truths were 'real' truths. The qualified inclusion of saltatory truths makes more sense when viewed in light of James's psychology. As flights of thought become more and more rapid, and less a matter of explicit attention, we become

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[48] See "William James's Ideas", in Putnam 1990: p. 231.
[49] Richard Gale, *op. cit.*, takes the contrary view, and finds pragmatism lacking. See pp. 128*ff.*
[50] James claims Charles Strong's work provided the distinction in question. I have been unable to locate the original.

capable of moving to conclusions without explicit knowledge of the path taken (this path may be associative or logical, *i.e.*, the execution of an operation conjoining two otherwise dissimilar objects of thought.) Thus, as in habitual actions where the individual motions constitutive of the event are not central to consciousness, in 'leaping' to a warranted conclusion we bypass or ignore the phenomena that would mark our progress if we had instead proceeded in an ambulatory fashion. This is part of James's meaning in his talk of past experience funding our current cognitive operations. To return to the metaphor in "The Stream of Thought", we might say that as knowers we sometimes fly from treetop to treetop, and sometimes we hop along a single branch.

Summary: Noteworthy Aspects of Pragmatism

I have tried to demonstrate in the proceeding that James's familiar pragmatist writings have their roots in his psychology, and that a reader needs to distinguish James's polemical moments where he is battling with peers from his description of his *Weltanschauung* free of such concerns. That pragmatism, even at the end of James's career, remained closely tied to his psychological thoughts can be seen from the following passage from *The Meaning of Truth*:

> The trueness of an idea must mean *something definite in it that determines its tendency to work,* and indeed towards this object rather than that....What that something is in the case of truth psychology tells us: the idea has associates peculiar to itself, motor as well as ideational; it tends by its place and nature to call these into being, one after another; and the appearance of them in succession is what we mean by the 'workings' of the idea. According to what they are, does the trueness or falseness which the idea harbored come to light. These tendencies have still earlier conditions which, in a general way, biology, psychology and biography can trace. This whole chain of natural causal conditions produces a resultant state of things in which new relations, not simply causal, can now be found, or into which they can now be introduced,—the relations namely which we epistemologists study, relations of adaptation, of substitutability, or instrumentality, of reference and of truth.
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> The prior causal conditions, altho there could be no knowing of any kind, true or false, without them, are but preliminary to the question of what makes the ideas true or false when once their tendencies have been obeyed....They are not 'saltatory' at any rate, for they evoke their consequences contiguously, from next to next only; and not until the final result of the whole associative sequence, actual or potential, is in our mental sight, can we feel sure what its epistemological significance, if it have any, may be. ("Professor Pratt on Truth" MT, 96)

This passage is also an example of James's view of the universe as indeterminate and undergoing increase, two ideas well hidden in *Principles*, but constituents of James's world-view from early in his intellectual development.[51] These were part of his version of naturalism, and James took pains to emphasize the situating of conscious states within a spatiotemporal world in "A Plea for Psychology as a 'Natural

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[51] This is a view that baffles many contemporary readers. It will be discussed below. See Lovejoy's brief comments on the notion in *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Science' (1892)[52]. He saw new truths as adding substantially to the sum-total of reality, and this served as grist for another of his mills. In the essay quoted, James goes on to consider the critic's call for pragmatism to describe what really exists, apart from what a knower takes there to be, and rejects this. He then considers problems of privacy of pain experiences, as a challenge to his view of 'transition' of experiences, the leading from one to another that occurs when we have a truth-relation. James writes:

> "Some day of course, or even now somewhere in the larger life of the universe, different men's headaches may become confluent or be 'co-conscious.' Here and now, however, headaches do transcend each other and, when not felt, can only be known conceptually. My idea is that you really have a headache; it works well with what I see of your expression, and with what I hear you say; but it does n't put me in possession of the headache itself. I am still at one remove, and the headache 'transcends' me, even tho it be in nowise transcendent of human experience generally." (MT, 98)

Later James says ideas bridge gulfs between us and objects, the qualification 'fully or approximately' referring back to earlier claim that they may lead us to the experience itself, or to something as useful. (The earlier claim occurs at MT, 91.) At *ibid.*, 98 he distinguishes between the 'hypothetical universe of discourse' and the 'altogether different world of natural fact.' This is one more example of his antipathy towards vicious intellectualism: James insists on inverting the familiar picture of the relation between knower and world, making the local world of 'natural facts' primary, and giving the universe as a whole a slightly subordinate status as a 'hypothesis.' This inversion of local versus global pictures of our world, combined with James's immanentism, mark out his view as highly idiosyncratic in the history of philosophy. Regarding his immanentism, the difference with Absolute Idealists, Kantians,[53] and the opponents of pragmatism couldn't be greater (here Frege too is noteworthy for our purposes, though he was unknown to James). Thus we see James denying that truth has a transcendent quality: "Truth here is a relation, not of our ideas to non-human realities, but of conceptual parts of our experience to sensational parts. Those thoughts are true which guide us to *beneficial interaction* with sensible particulars as they occur, whether they copy these in advance or not." ("Humanism and Truth" MT, 51.)

What has not been considered above is the familiar pragmatist point about what we now call 'pseudo-problems': if a 'nominal' difference is all that we face, we have a 'difference that doesn't make a difference', and hence an unreal quandary or question that may legitimately be abandoned. This is more a product of the pragmatic method than a constituent, in my view, and has been accordingly omitted from this analysis. We must note that the pragmatic method, as an approach to settling philosophical questions, has as its analogue Wittgenstein's theory of meaning. (We may, in fact, come to see Wittgenstein's

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[52] *Essays in Psychology*, pp. 270-277. See especially James's comments at 272.

[53] Much of James's *Weltanschauung* seems similar to Kant at first blush (certainly the percept/concept distinction, which seems to echo Kant's distinction between intuitions and concepts), though two differences come immediately to mind: James had no time for a realm of noumena (*Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 48n20.), nor did he think the categories of the understanding were unchanging (*Pragmatism*,

modifying his theory of meaning as an attempt to accommodate the idiosyncratic, 'momentous' questions that colour our overall view of life.)

(3) Functional Nominalism: What is a concept?

> "My description of things...starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order." ("A World of Pure Experience" [1904], ERE p. 22)

Surveying the totality of James's literary corpus, we find two professed attitudes regarding nominalism that seem incompatible. In the *Principles*, James discusses nominalism vis-à-vis conceptual realism and comes down clearly on the side of the latter. However, in *Pragmatism*, James notes the affinity of the pragmatic stance with nominalism, suggesting a shift has occurred in the intervening years.[54] Did James change his mind, abandoning realism for nominalism in his later years? This is not the case. I believe his remarks are consistent, and that attention to the nature of his critical remarks in *Principles* will demonstrate this. It is James's theory of conception—which remained consistent throughout his career—that allows him to criticize one of the theses connected with nominalism while embracing its basic spirit.

Apart from fleshing out our picture of James's theory of mind, examination of the function of conception should accomplish two things: it should explain James's view of what concepts are, in terms of both origin and function, and show his method or approach to be 'bottom up', giving pride-of-place to particulars, and making concepts somewhat crude substitutes for them. (This is a fairly familiar empiricist position.) Where James is interesting is in his denial of 'hard core' nominalism that tries to do without universals, the so-called 'bundle-theory' famous from Berkeley. Also of note will be the recurrence of James's notion of 'fringes', as they form part of an explanation of how reference is possible.

"Th[e] sense of sameness" James wrote in *Principles*, "is the very keel and backbone of our thinking." (434) Immediately upon entering into his discussion of the role 'conception' plays in the mental life of a human being, two things are clear. James means to stress the commonalities between human thought and the capacities of other animals (for even organisms with rudimentary nervous systems show a sense of sameness in reflex response and learning), and he means to distinguish between the vehicles of our meanings (concepts) and the activity of conception. This latter strategy is typical of James's psychology: it shows his functional approach to traditional questions. Rather than ask 'what is a concept?', James ponders how human beings ever came to engage in conception, and what function it fulfils in the current mental economy. The function of conception is built from this basic ability to 'sense sameness' in experience, and

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lec. 7, p. 120). Thomas Carlson has ably explored the affinities between James and Kant in "James and the Kantian Tradition" in Putnam, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to William James*.

[54] This is supported by the view that James had two fairly distinct periods in his thought: the psychological period of roughly 1878-1896, and the philosophical one of 1897-1910. Yet a quick look at the number of references to the *Principles* in James's final work, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, belies this interpretation.

it is crucial, James argues, for having knowledge in the full sense. The possibility of objective reference looms large here, and James defines conception as "the function by which we…identify a numerically distinct and permanent subject of discourse" (436) and calls concepts the thoughts which are the 'vehicles' of this activity. James chose to talk of conception to straddle the common ambiguity between the object-of-thought and the thought-as-object[55], with the added bonus of giving his analysis a pragmatic character. "The word 'conception'" he argued "is unambiguous. It properly denotes neither the mental state nor what the mental state signifies, but the relation between the two, namely, the *function* of the mental state in signifying just that particular thing." (*ibid.*) James examines the many ways in which this ability can manifest itself in our lives, and considers familiar questions about the ontological status of various kinds of concepts.

To balance his earlier, Heraclitean account of the stream of thought, James in this chapter emphasizes the solidity of conception. He stresses that conceptions cannot change, this despite their immersion in the stream of thought. While the things external to the mind to which we point *via* conception may change, our conceptions are unaltered. James gives as an example the scorching of a piece of paper: while the paper has changed from white to black, the concept 'white', which had been applied to his perception of the paper has not itself changed meanings to 'black'. James makes it clear that without such conceptual immutability, we could never have knowledge of such changes as these.[56]

One remark that signals this is not an abandonment of the earlier view of mental life occurs at 435, where James notes that intended sameness is, from the psychological view, the significant phenomenon. The mere fact that one can turn out to be wrong in imputing sameness to things is not fatal to his account. "The name which I have given to the principle, in calling it the law of constancy in our meanings, accentuates its subjective character, and justifies us in laying it down as the most important of al the features of our mental structure." (*ibid.*) To be precise, James is here making two claims: first, we do not need to presuppose knowledge of real (*extra mentem*) sameness to understand this 'sense of sameness'. On the contrary, without subjective awareness of sameness, 'real' identity might constantly pass us by. Second, our ability to perceive sameness might not be completely veridical: we might judge sameness where none ever exists. James wants to concede these two philosophical points in order to explore the matter speaking as a psychologist.

Here we have a potential confusion: how can we have unchanging conceptual activity within the flux of the stream of thought? It seems that we are in motion, and this makes it seem odd to suggest that we might

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[55] T his distinction has not been overlooked by philosophers, and the myriad of technical distinctions extant attest to this. If might help here to note that James is attempting to alter the reader to the aspects of conceptual usage in a manner not unfamiliar to readers of Frege. His distinction mirrors that rendered by Frege via '*Bedeutung*' and '*Vorstellung*', respectively.
[56] See also *Some Problems of Philosophy*, chapter 6.

refer (and know that we refer) in a constant manner. James dismisses the notion that we simply re-experience an earlier mental state: his neural holism and evolutionism dictate that the mind/brain is always changing, and cannot simply leap back to a prior state. To do so would imply that the intervening brain-processes had no effect (as if they never happened.) But his distinction between the vehicle of the act of conception and the function of that act allows him to have his logical realism (see SPP, p. 106) without sacrificing the flux of the stream of thought (James actually reminds the reader of his commitment at *Principles* 453). The state of mind may in fact vary significantly—James notes how we sometimes utilize mental pictures, other times words alone or in combination—as tokens or focal points during conception. The vehicles may vary, but so long as the same function is fulfilled, we are still dealing with the same conception.[57] James borrows from Berkeley the notion that thinking utilizes paradigmatic images or pictures, though he denies this must always be the case. He also denies the image is what does the work: his earlier account of centers and peripheral parts of the stream of thought dictates that it is the dimly felt fringes or feelings of tendency[58] that guide our thoughts to their object. The image is an epiphenomenon, and need not always be present. It is the transitive parts of the stream of thought that do the work of conceiving an object. (446)

Semantic Pluralism: Universals are what they appear to be

In his account of conception, James eschews nominalism for its denial of universals. This was in fact a rejection of another component of nominalism: the tendency to think of all mental states as pictures, where an idea copied the sum total of attributes of its object, and the mind thereby was committed to thinking all such attributes in conjunction. This (rather extreme) form of nominalism denied the combinatory and discriminatory powers of the mind that James thought so central to it. Thus, he chided nominalists for denying the function of abstracting qualities away from 'primal' (or learned) instances.

James then begins to criticize the opposing 'conceptualist' (realist) view: he breaks with tradition in insisting that abstract conceptions are not *per se* universals, yielding a robust ontology of concepts (or more accurately, conceptual functions)[59]. He gives as an example of an abstract quality that is not a universal the 'whiteness' seen in a particular wintry landscape. (447) Insofar as the thinker's attention is not drawn to connect the hue with the sensory scene from which it came, it is not particularized. Yet, since it is not intended to mean 'whiteness' (or as an example of a colour, perhaps) it is not yet universalized. James seems therefore to have room for a 'truncated' act of conception called 'abstraction', where an aspect of an

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[57] Similarly, the function of a baseball player's making a throw to first is fulfilled if the ball lands in the first-baseman's glove, regardless of the different positions from which the throw may be made.
[58] In the chapter under consideration James identifies these two, whereas his earlier comments suggested they were distinct entities.
[59] One aspect of interest I have not discussed is explored by James at 436, where he distinguished between acts of 'simple' and 'compound' conception. This merits some comparision with a similar idea fundamental to logical atomism.

object is attended to, which can then form a new conception the thinker goes on to create a more specific context.[60]

Briefly, James takes issue with two ideas that he sees as skewing our view of conception. The first is shared by both sides of the debate; this is the view that the idea must resemble its object. James (as mentioned in section 2, above) challenged the representational view of knowledge, in part via his emphasis on the transitory aspects of thought, which clearly had no imagistic component with which to picture anything. They lead us to a satisfactory relation with the object, rather than replicate it. The second confusion is specific to the conceptualists, who contrast universals as somehow more real than particular conceptions, and possibly even as an extra-mental source of knowledge.

James contrasted the failings of these two views, the conceptualist's positing an extra-mental 'thing' we grasp, and the nominalist's admitting that a 'quasi-universal' exists insofar as we refer to an 'indefinite number of particular ideas' (450) with his own functional account of concepts. We can use the same vehicle in a variety of ways: to lead to a particular experience (or object), to abstract an aspect of a known thing an use it to lead our thinking elsewhere, or to classify and generalize, using a concept in a manner familiar to philosophers to cleave experience into categories of interest to us. James denies that universals exist as things outside human minds, but they do exist as functions: they are as manifestly real in our behaviour as any particular concept. As harsh as James was towards Berkeley and the Mills a few pages previously, his frustration with conceptual realists shows when he gives nominalists a backhanded complement, calling their view "less hollow than the opposite one which makes the vehicle of universal conceptions to be an *actus purus* of the soul." (451) Apart from James's attempt to heal a rift that has persisted in philosophy for most of its history, what is noteworthy in James's account of concepts is the role of selectivity and attention throughout this activity. (In one instance (453), James takes pains to argue that attending to a singular object requires more mental effort than a general conception, due to the many unique features of that object that come before the mind.) Having made his account of concepts, he will go on to characterize them (in their psychological context) in a later chapter (XXII, "Reasoning") as "purely teleological weapons of the mind." (961) Thus our active nature is stressed in the use of conceptions, and this seems to mark James's position as a departure from both traditional empiricism and rationalism.

Where James departs from nominalism as it is generally known is to affirm that universals function in the way one normally thinks of them: as referring to a definite class or set of entities, rather than as referring to an unfelt number of particulars, of which we must have a definite conception.[61] We can refer to a class

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[60] We might think of an analogy with logic here: James's abstraction is akin to a free variable, and his deictic sentence about 'that white' in the vista would be an open sentence. James's language in the passage quoted suggests he views the situation in similar terms, with a borrowing of logical notions from Bradley.

[61] One might plausibly argue this is an application of James's maxim 'esse est sentiri' to the problem of universals. On his phenomenalism, see section five, below.

without being immediately aware of its membership. But James departs from traditional logical realism by his insistence that conceiving universals is in an important sense incomplete without a return to the realm of particular (what James called 'concrete') experiences. We might borrow from his talk in *Pragmatism* of the 'cash value' of truth, and say that concepts are analogous to stocks: a perceptual event provides a sensory 'dividend', without which the stock seriously lacks value, while its meaning is not exhausted with that dividend. On the contrary, a concept still holds 'virtual' value across the board, in addition to its dividends. Thus we hang on to conceptual truths, sometimes simply in the hopes of long-term benefits.

Causal Nominalism: concepts come from particular experiences, get cashed out in them as well

James's genetic account of concepts begins to show itself in his argument concerning the growth of conceptual knowledge. Here he remarks that "every one of our conceptions is of something which our attention originally tore out of the continuum of felt experience, and provisionally isolated so as to make of it an individual topic of discourse." (439) This is where James is most faithful to the spirit of nominalism. His insistence that concepts arise from perceptual experience, through naming bits or aspects of that experience, yields a picture of concepts that denies them—and especially universals—the traditional rationalist's pride-of-place in ontology. James's attention to function is designed to show how concepts, once selected, are preserved in humanity's repertoire: concepts are continually compared to perceptual experience in the hopes of gaining provisional verification. (Furthermore, James's ties the notion of employing a concept to a family of more mundane psychological functions (438): pointing, remembering, and representing jointly contribute to the ability to form and employ concepts.) The persistence of nominalism (despite his sanctioning of universal reference and abstraction) can be seen in this twofold appeal to the perceptible world: it is the plenum from which aspects are singled out (in some cases forming *Vorstellungen* or image-tokens we use in conceptual activities), and it is the field of a concept's verification. James makes his case for this view, which we might call 'causal nominalism' to distinguish it from the semantic thesis of Berkeley, not only in *Principles*, but in the essays in radical empiricism (see the quote at the beginning of this section, *supra*, p. 17), and in his final work prepared for publication, his textbook *Some Problems of Philosophy*. There he writes:

> "Out of this aboriginal sensible muchness attention carves out its objects, which conception then names and identifies forever—in the sky 'constellations,' on the earth 'beach,' 'sea,' 'cliff,' 'bushes,' 'grass.' Out of time we cut 'days' and 'nights,' 'summers' and 'winters.' We say *what* each part of the sensible continuum is, and all these abstracted *whats* are concepts." (SPP, 32-33)

He goes on to add, with characteristic emphasis, "*The intellectual life of man consists almost wholly in his substitution of a conceptual order for the perceptual order in which his experience originally comes.*" (*ibid.*, p. 33) The distinction between primary and higher-level consciousness re-emerges here, as James argues that "[c]onception is a secondary process, not indispensable to life. It presupposes perception,

which is self-sufficing, as all lower creatures, in whom conscious life goes on by reflex adaptations, show." (*ibid.*, 46) James consistently portrays our higher-level consciousness as involving a trade-off: for the increase in our adaptability and organizational powers there is a peculiar kind of cognitive loss. Concepts, static tokens that stand for reality, cannot convey the original richness and fluidity of perceived experience. Even the concept 'flux', he notes at one point (*Principles*, 442), must remain static to describe what it describes.

James's picture of the relationship between concepts and percepts allows for more rarefied conceptual applications than this sketch may indicate. Basic concepts used to navigate in the empirical world having been created, James notes that humans continue to employ their concept-making abilities to form new relations between concepts apart from their perceptual applications. (440; *cf.* 952*ff*, 1215*ff*.) As perceptual experiences get categorized and re-organized, so do experiences of conception, which are just as present to the stream of thought.[62]

Talk of conception recurs in many later chapters in *Principles*, and finds expression in James's later discussions of 'vicious intellectualism' and other moral and epistemological notions scattered across his entire output. However, it might be useful to consider James's concluding thoughts in "Conception" in *Principles*. There he likens our conceptual scheme to a sieve (455) in which we attempt to catch or isolate certain perceptual features of our environment. "Most facts and relations fall through its meshes," he writes, these "being either too subtle or insignificant to be fixed in any conception. But whenever a physical reality is caught and identified as the same with something already conceived, it remains on the sieve, and all the predicates and relations of the conception with which it is identified become its predicates and relations too[.]" James calls this process "the translation of the perceptual into the conceptual order of the world." (*ibid.*) Notable here is how the pre-existence of a conceptual 'way of looking' at the sensory scene of perception selects and orders the elements of perception. As a musician tends to hear tonal relations in an aural scene, or an architect sees a building in terms of its form, as conceptual beings in general we process our experience. The conceptions we habitually employ can, James thinks, tell the psychologist a great deal about human interests and modes of attention.[63] Also nascent in this concluding passage is a guiding thought of his philosophical *Weltanschauung*, *viz.*, that reality is in some sense too rich for conception. James's somewhat pessimistic judgement about conception may turn out to be at odds with

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[62] The suggestion that a concept might be 'present to themind' may seem odd, but even without the presence of an idea (a sensory image 'replayed' by imagination), James seems simply to mean the intention to follow those feelings of tendency that constitute the conceptual function: thus to have the concept of throwing a baseball before the mind might simply involve entertaining the associated bodily feelings, and not a picture, of the action.

[63] This notion is brought out in a different way in *Some Problems of Philosophy*, chapter 4. For those who would see a break between James's psychological and philosophical writings, comparison of these two texts—in essence James's first and his last—is extremely revealing: the thoughts of the *Principles* are

his seeming optimism regarding a careful psychological inquiry, for he also gives the impression that a perspicuous inquiry such as his, revealing the 'true character' of conception, might let us gain a new breadth of vision, philosophically.

(4) Psychologism: How do we account for analytic truths? Does psychology touch logic?

Contrary to most classical empiricists, James had a certain respect for logic (though he consistently denied any talent for it), and saw an important role for it in his philosophy of mind. When it came time to write the final chapter of *Principles*, James turned his attention to the nature and origin of necessary truths, reasoning, judgement, doubt, and concepts pertaining to space, time, causality and value.[64] His concern, as he put it, was with the *psychogenesis* of the *a priori*, (1215) and the relation of the logical backbone of our thought to the natural world. In the historical background of James's efforts loomed the earlier work of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, both of whom aroused James's admiration (the latter less so than the former), but neither of whom satisfactorily addressed this issue of the origin of *a priori* truths.

The status of logic poses a problem for empiricists. The experiences upon which we construct our knowledge of the world do not come in any logical order, and the methods of reasoning and proof available to us are quite clearly developments in the natural history of human beings as thinkers. Yet logic seems to be something more than a technique or an impression of the world, passively received. Everywhere we turn in philosophy, we come upon ideas that exhibit strange features, which seem to dictate what we ought to do with them. In the final chapter of *Principles*, James tackled the vexing question of the origin and nature of necessary truths. Were they innate, springing from the mind and thus presumably linked to brain structure in some way? Or were they the products of our interaction with our environment, and thus contingent upon it? James was aware of Mill's inductive grounding of necessary truths and found it wanting, and he likewise criticized Spencer for his vagueness in attributing the emergence of such a body of truths to "the supposition that the inner cohesions are adjusted to the outer persistences by accumulated experience of…outer persistences."[65] James recognized that some of our concepts had relations sufficiently immutable to shape and guide our experience, to help us assimilate it profitably, yet he could not accept the notion of 'innate' ideas as some kind of organon evincing a soul, or, worse, an isomorphism between the mind of man and the mind of God.[66]

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scattered throughout, with and without citations by James. Here, too, pragmatism is most clearly integrated with his earlier thought.

[64] Many of these had already been treated elsewhere *Principles*, however, this chapter was an attempt at explaining their emergence as a family of concepts and techniques.

[65] The quote is from Spencer's *Principles of Psychology* §189, quoted by James in his *Principles*, p. 1218. In the passage quoted, Spencer goes on to attribute the degree of 'strength' of a truth's necessity a function of the mass of experience behind it, making analyticity thus proportionate to the amount of past 'reinforcing' experience. Mill's view on necessary truths is found in his *System of Logic*, bk II, v, §4.

[66] James's naturalism in psychology nonetheless did not make him hostile to religion *per se*. See Cooper, "James's God" *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* (1995).

In typical fashion, James sought a *via media* between the extreme psychologism of Mill and the innatism of his critics.[67] In arguing that the laws of logic have their origin in the mind (that is, that they are features of us in some sense, rather than about some other aspect of the world), James is espousing a form of psychologism. Logical laws are, on his view, psychological laws, albeit of a very special kind. However, co-opting the term 'psychologism' for positions like Mill's is awkward, for it makes sense to consider James's view a form of psychologism, although his position may well avoid many of the criticisms that are traditionally leveled at that view.

Debates about the relationship between logic and psychology during the turn of the century largely passed James by. This was due in part to his own mortality, as his final writings show a growing interest in the nature of logic, as they show him attempting to argue against the current of his times, linking his own 'rejection of logic' to his comments in the conclusion of *Principles*. Furthermore, in America and England at least, awareness of the issue of the relation of logic to psychology grew considerably during the years following James's death in 1910. (Most commentators explain this so-called rejection of logic in terms of a remark in *A Pluralistic Universe*, and James's friendship with Henri Bergson, and leave the matter at that.) For James, no account of the mind would be complete without consideration of its highest fruits: the conceptual systems human beings construct, which enable them to have such unparalleled cognition and command over their environment.

Historical reinterpretation aside, one might still ask: 'What is the point in exploring James's attitude towards *a priori* truths?' The issue is mainly one regarding James's place in the post-Fregean world. Frege initiated (most notably in his criticism of Husserl) a highly influential (and fruitful) separation of the 'sciences' of logic and psychology. The division was essentially one of normative versus descriptive enterprises. Logic explores the norms of thought; psychology describes how people actually do think, in isolation from such norms.[68] Now, for James, it is important that logical laws, like everything else in human culture, have a naturalistic ground, if you will.[69] That means that the laws of logic cannot be

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[67] Today perhaps the best-known criticism is Frege's, but James is not known to have read his work. See Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic*, §§5-10.

[68] Thus we see Husserl—suitably chastened by Frege—writing in 1900: "Correct judgements and false ones, insightful ones and blind, come and go according to natural laws. Like all psychical phenomena, they have their causal antecedents and consequences. But the logician does not care about these natural connections. Rather he seeks ideal connections, which he does not always—in fact only exceptionally—find realized in the actual course of thinking. Not a physics, but rather an ethics of thinking is his goal." (*Logical Investigations*, §19.)

[69] While almost totally spurned by philosophers, this approach to investingating the origins of logic has a robust history in psychology. Jean Piaget's and Konrad Lorenz's work in the middle of the 20th century, and Edelman's recent work both testify to psychology's circumvention of the anti-psychologism prevalent in philosophy. Tooby and Cosmides' so called 'evolutionary psychology' is perhaps the best known example. See their contributions to *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, ed., J. Barkow, *et al.* (Oxford UP, 1992.)

supernatural, or totally transexperiential. Yet we see James in his final chapter of *Principles* arguing against experience as the source of logical norms. He is particularly venomous toward Spencer, who is vague enough to lump heredity and ontogeny along with sense-experience as the experience writ large from whence the *a priori* is descended. James makes a distinction that appears somewhat at odds with his later radical empiricism, though it is a sensible point: he distinguishes (1222*ff.*) between causal influences upon the brain. There are 'front door' causes, which are sensations conveyed to the mind via the afferent nerves (James is not quite as specific as that, he rather talks in familiar terms of sense-experience), and various 'back door' causes, among which we should distinguish the effects of chemicals upon the functioning of the brain (*e.g.*, various drugs, pathogens, *etc.*) and events influencing the present structure of the brain, which includes 'accidental' events affecting growth, as well as heritable, or genetic traits. James chides Spencer for labelling these very different causes 'experiences' which affect nervous function.[70] In short, James argued we think the way we do because of the joint effects of our genes (they determine the structure of our nervous system as that commonly possessed by *Homo sapiens sapiens*), of the history of our brain as a physical object, and our sensory experience, past and present. But the role of individual sensory experience (the 'front-door' causes) is virtually null in the acquisition of *a priori* truths. Experience is not stored in the brain in the manner it happened to the organism, it is categorized, and the basic way we do this is the effect of 'back door' causes, though the full flowering of the ability takes a more individual quality than this story would first intimate.

Thus the remark quoted earlier (above, p. 111) about the combined fields of biology, psychology and biography tracing "in a general way" the present tendencies of experience is not only consistent with his earlier thoughts, but his emphasis on individuality in his pragmatic writings begins to make more sense. The complexity and uniqueness of each nervous system entails that variations in habits of thought will manifest themselves when we compare individuals. Genetic and morphological variations in the growing brain will yield idiosyncrasies in the function of conception, on a small scale. Though it will take some explanation, James definitely does not draw from this the conclusion that the laws of logic are mere inductive generalizations of instances of human thought, nor does he argue that logic differs substantially from person to person.

But such was the view of Mill, and of Spencer, and this is the typical view criticized (or ridiculed) in discussions of 'psychologism.' Thus we see a fairly famous characterization of psychologism, made in 1918:

> "The psychological founding of logic appears to be not without analogy with the surprising method of advocates of evolutionary ethics, who expect to discover what *is*

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[70] Although he has not used the term 'pure experience' at this time, James cautions that he is employing a stipulative defintion, whereby for this chapter 'experience' refers to 'front-door' causes, or what we would call sense-experience. He does this at 1226.

> good by inquiring what cannibals have *thought* good. I sometimes feel inclined to apply the historical method to the multiplication table. I should make a statistical inquiry among school-children, before their pristine wisdom has been biased by teachers. I should put down their answers as to what 6 times 9 amounts to, I should work out the average of their answers to six places of decimals, and should then decide that, at the present stage of human development, this average is of the value of 6 times 9." (Philip E. B. Jourdain [1918], quoted by R. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966, p. 80.)

This is what we might call a 'protopicture' of psychologism. (A protopicture is an implicit, often incoherent sketch of an answer, or species of answer, to a philosophical question.[71]) The protopicture presented by Jourdain involves both the notion of democratic aggregation of mathematical truth (Mill's inductive generalizations) and the notion of an 'ur-truth' lying buried in the human organism. It is interesting to note the ambiguity of his presentation: were this a sincere proposal for research, it is not clear what kind of answers would count as 'pristine' examples of human calculation, and what instances would be disallowed due to the influence of incipient education. The picture is meant to appear ridiculous and incoherent: proponents of psychologism must hold that children learning arithmetic in some sense represent the bona fide cases of arithmetical activity, and we must adjust our practices to them. This is of course a reversal of the course of education in mathematics[72].

So where do logical laws fit into this? James does not accept the anti-psychologistic separation of logic from psychology[73], but he stresses the stability of conceptual relations. Logic might be a normative investigation, but like all norms, James sought to give a natural history of their emergence, connecting the phenomenon of logic to human life. James's particular brand of psychologism is not vulnerable to the 'democratic criticism' implied in Jourdain's picture, where the truths of mathematics must shift with popular opinion. Indeed, James criticized Mill's inductive view of analyticity (*Principles*, 1249-50). In James's view, concepts like those found in mathematics are not subject to the whims of those using them for the first time. In the same way that wealth is distributed unequally in the world of finance, conceptual rigidity, or if you like immunity from criticism is heterogeneous. Some concepts are more inflexible than others. This, James suggests (in various *obiter dicta* throughout the *Principles*, e.g., 230, 244), is a function of the grammar of languages, and the lexicon of concepts we inherit. [74]

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[71] 'Protopicture' is my rendering of a German term used by Baker and Hacker. In discussing the Augustinian *Urbild* (1:36), they note similar features to the ones I describe here. See also Wittgenstein's use of 'proto-phenomenon' (*Investigations* §654), which may have served as an inspiration.

[72] It is, of course, a further leap from insisting that psychology has no place in logic to claiming that mathematics reduces to logic. Thus it is typical to distinguish the 'anti-psychologism' of Frege, Russell, the young Wittgenstein, and others from the position of 'logicism'.

[73] He occasionally saw it as a rhetorical tool used to undermine his own account of truth. See his discussion in *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 84*ff*., especially 85: "A favorite way of opposing the more abstract to the more concrete account is to accuse those who favor the latter of 'confounding psychology with logic.'" Despite his frustration with critics, he took pains to address their concerns here and elsewhere.

[74] *Cf*. the details of James's claim that "philosophy has always turned on grammatical particles" from "A World of Pure Experience", quoted above, p. 99.

An Active *A Priori*

James breaks away from the empiricist position, claiming as we have noted that the source of logical relations is 'back door': we cannot derive logical laws from the flux of experience, on the contrary, we actively arrange such experience into a more useable form. James's picture of an active mind makes any passive model, such as those found in classical empiricism, unappealing to him. Human beings classify and re-arrange their experiences by comparing and discriminating between them, and this classificatory ability is a result of our brain structure being what it is (1234*ff.*). That ability is inherited; furthermore it is modified by events in the physical history of our nervous system. Given this shape of the brain (it is, recall, not completely plastic), we categorize experience in ways that are useful to us given our ends. Note that these categories are not said to be God-given (they have, presumably, a natural history), nor are they forever fixed: back door causes can alter from person to person, or generation to generation. Moreover, we have not isolated the degree to which idiosyncrasy affects this situation. (James likens the brain to a pudding or pile of dough souring or fermenting, the process determined by minute distributions in its interior, not forces external.) However, a point about idiosyncrasy needs to be made: James insisted that agreement and disagreement with our fellows assumes a large degree of 'cognitive overlap' among persons, not to mention the corrective effect of discourse (*Pragmatism*, 34-35, 101-102.) People who think in a highly idiosyncratic way will, if they have it within their power, have a strong tendency (or perhaps we might say motivation) to train themselves to think like their peers, though recall we are talking about basic logical habits, not about matters of particular fact.

It would seem that James's view is a form of psychologism that nevertheless does not permit the laws of logic to be subject to much debate or subjective modification: they are deep-seated in the mind, emergent from its internal developing throughout its history, and exist as a form of comparison, not as consciously-assented-to principles or rules. They are 'internalized', and while they are natural phenomena (they are not transcendent of the human species), their mutability is not tantamount to claiming that logical laws are subjective.[75] They do have a function, however, that further ties them to the psychological story James tells.

Indeed, they are linked to our capacities for comparison, remembering, discrimination, and as conception emerges as one more activity in our repertoire, James argues that stability of meanings emerges, with the familiar picture of *a priori* truths forming a scheme (or, to use James's metaphor, a sieve) within which questions may be formed and investigations of the world undertaken. James's linking these thoughts with his remarks in "Conception", with the emphasis on volition, are seen when he says "we are masters of our

meanings" (1249), and do not find, *e.g.*, numbers in the physical world, as Mill argued, but group physical things in a determinate and constant manner. The stars in a constellation are not unequivocally numbered, as James points out, rather, we must select and abstract from our perceptual experience. It is the persistence of a concept's function (in this case, an abstraction of a number we apply to our visual field) that gives it stability of meaning, or, in James's terms, that constitutes the meaning of a concept. Thus, our *a priori* truths' rigidity can be understood as a fixed way we put those concepts to use.[76] Local conceptual rigidity blossoms into complex social functions given our fruitful brains: James argues in this chapter that the natural and pure sciences, as well as various ethical[77] and artistic thought, emerge from our urge to compare and classify, and the strong desire for order that many humans manifest.

This is a noticeable difference from those particular concepts, or empirical ones, which vary with context. The squareness of a building's foundation is contingent upon the persistence of that foundation, the concept of squareness does not. Rather, the latter is what we use to gauge that persistence in the physical world. The concept 'square' exhibits immutability across applications in a variety of contexts: whether we are doing geometry homework, building a house, or telling four defenders in hockey how to protect their goal, squareness remains the conception it has always been.[78]

But how do *a priori* truths retain this solidity we impute to them? In *The Meaning of Truth* (as he had in several other works), James gives his answer, but with an unfortunate exaggeration.

> If now it be asked how, if triangles, squares, square roots, genera, and the like, are but improvised human 'artefacts,' their properties and relations can be so promptly known to be ' eternal,' the humanistic answer is easy. If triangles and genera are of our own production we can keep them invariant. We can make them 'timeless' by expressly decreeing that on the things we mean time shall exert no altering effect, that they are intentionally and it may be fictitiously abstracted from every corrupting real associate and condition. But relations between invariant objects will themselves be invariant. Such relations cannot be happenings, for by hypothesis nothing shall happen to the objects. I have tried to show in the last chapter of my *Principles of Psychology* that they can only be relations of comparison. No one so far seems to have noticed my suggestion, and I am too ignorant of the development of mathematics to feel very confident of my own view. But if it were correct it would solve the difficulty perfectly. Relations of comparison are

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[75] Colin McGinn has an interesting, contemporary variation on James's tertium quid between logicism and psychologism in "Logic, Mind and Mathematics" in Bo Dahlbom, ed., *Dennett and His Critics* (Blackwell: 1993).

[76] Furthermore, mathematical, logical and many scientific concepts are very special in the degree of variation tolerated by groups of users. They are especially 'rarefied' kinds of concepts, from the psychologist's point of view. See James, pp. 1230, 1235-6, 1244, 1250.

[77] For those who would see James as a crude hedonist, see his remarks at 1264*ff*., where he discusses the difference between the habitual and gratifying and that which pleases our ethical sensibility.

[78] Here, regarding these examples philosophically, a second order act of conception is added to the mix. We compare the thoughts of the math student, the architect and the hockey coach, and deem them to be employing the same conception in different contexts. This despite the differences in physical or mental tools used (telling a player to gauge his own position relative to two comrades is different from the measuring one does on a construction site), the degree of precision demanded, *etc*.

> matters of direct inspection. As soon as mental objects are mentally compared, they are perceived to be either like or unlike. But once the same, always the same, once different, always different, under these timeless conditions. (MT, 52.)

James feels free to conclude a paragraph later that "[t]he whole fabric of the *a priori* sciences can thus be treated as a man-made product." Here we have a form of psychologism, but the emphasis on human discretion is undue. The volitional aspect of this process is exaggerated, making the use of mathematical concepts seem to involve a deliberate, conscious act of 'retaining the previous meaning' as part of every employment. Certainly it would be more consistent with James's overall view of concepts to see it more as a matter of habits accreted over long periods of time. A needed corrective comment can be found in *Pragmatism*, where James notes "We can no more play fast and loose with these abstract relations than we can do so with our sense-experiences. They coerce us; we must treat them consistently, whether or not we like the results. The rules of addition apply to our debts as rigorously as to our assets." (*Pragmatism*, 101) The ultimate source of this coercion is not entirely clear. James indicates at times[79] the force derives from the intersubjective nature of meaning, but his comments about debts and assets also hints at corrigibility over time, similar to the kind of correction sense-experience gives to one who entertains adventitious beliefs about what is around the corner. Concepts 'bent' when convenient simply fail to meet James's pragmatic criteria. This matter of whence logical truths derive their 'intransigence' is one of two areas concerning the *a priori* where James's basic position is clear but the background is muddled: when dealing with the 'purely' mental, James believes conceptual relations are firm, despite their humble origins. His thoughts on the ultimate causes of this rigidity are subject for minor speculations on our part, as they are in his chapter, where we might look (and be somewhat disappointed) for James's account of the causal origin of logical necessity.

James's failure, from our perspective, is one of detail, related to his exaggeration of the role of the will in employing concepts displaying apriority. This error could easily be corrected by adopting Wittgenstein's view: that the a priori finds its home in rules we express to justify constraining our conceptual applications. Wittgenstein's account preserves the possibility of a causal story, but removes the capricious quality that lingers in James's remarks that we 'make conceptual relations timeless'. Grammatical rules are fashioned over the long term, so their arbitrariness is not akin to the arbitrariness of selecting which set of chess pieces to use to play a given match. This point aside, we may ask where James locates the source of logic's actual form, here and now. Nowhere in his chapter does James specify whether the system of logic we use is inherited, or conveyed by the acquisition of language, as part of its grammar. The text of this chapter suggests a genetic etiology, though earlier remarks on the guiding hand of grammar belie this.

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[79] *E.g.*, *Pragmatism*, lectures two and five.

(5) Agnostic Phenomenalism: Imperceptibles Need Not Apply

"Thus…reality has a double aspect and must be called *Phenomenon.*" (Note dating 1879-1880.)

As can be seen from James's list of theses of his radical empiricism (particularly the version he gave in "La Notion de Conscience", where he says consciousness has no more existence than "that Matter to which Berkeley gave the *coup de grâce*" (ERE 271)), James clearly identified his work as an extension of Berkeley's philosophy, though without the postulation of souls or transempirical minds with their concomitant idealist commitments. Once again, we find James embracing a general philosophical approach while rejecting certain details, for regarding Berkeley, James clearly did not agree with his construal of the data of the mind. Neither Berkeley's treatment of sense-impressions nor that of concepts finds favour in *Principles*. Furthermore, James's holism regarding perceptual scenes distances his account from classic phenomenalism[80]. Both of these modifications warrant the appellation 'agnostic' to any phenomenalism ascribed James.[81] Despite attempts by commentators like Putnam [1995] to portray James as a realist, agnostic phenomenalism (or as Cooper [forthcoming] has put it, 'sensationalism') is a dominant theme in James's overall philosophy, as can be seen not only from the text of *Principles*, or the later empirical writings, but from his many notes on the subject. However, given James's modifications of the position, the difference between radical empiricism and contemporary forms of realism is slight.[82]

Psychology looks at Sensation, Things, and Reality

Several chapters in *Principles* combine to serve as an early source of James's phenomenalism. In "Sensation" James repeats his claim that sensations are poorly understood in traditional empiricism, and he makes an important distinction between sensation and perception. Perception, he argues, has a richness of associations about it, while sensation is (relatively) barren. The two must together be taken as separate

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[80] The *locus classicus* for the view is actually J. S. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* [1865], though Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge* [1710] is counted among its members. A. J. Ayer's essay "Phenomenalism" [1947] provides the classic analysis of the position (Ayer, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 125-166.); H. H. Price provides the classical defense. Ayer's version is in many ways dissimilar to James's. For a useful comparison of James's position vis-à-vis Ayer's, which furthermore construes radical empiricism and phenomenalism as mutally exclusive, see Edward H. Madden and Chandana Chakrabarti's "James' 'Pure Experience' versus Ayer's 'Weak Phenomenalism'", *Trans. Peirce Soc.*, 22(1), pp. 3-17 [1976].

[81] My first encounter with the phrase 'agnostic phenomenalism' was in conversation with W. E. Cooper; however, it occurs in James, *Manuscript Essays and Notes*, p. 227.

[82] Despite many mentions of 'phenomenalism' and 'phenomenist' in James's essays and notes, it is not the case that he unequivocally identified his position with these terms. James's modifications are not unimportant here: his position differed from contemporaries (such as C. A. Strong, who was both a phenomenalist and a panpsychist) who also used the term. James was well aware of the label, but chose to sail under his own banner of 'radical empiricism.' For a glimpse of his view ca. 1880, where James chose to use 'phenomenon' as his neutral term for experience (with 'experience' referring to the objective aspects in contradistinction to 'thought'), see "Phenomenalism" in MEN, pp. 170-178, esp. p. 175. Passages from this essay were incorporated into the chapter "Sensation" in *Principles*.

from what James called 'intellectual' thought, (conceptual activity) which is exclusively associative.[83] In "The Perception of 'Things'" James goes on to explore how a world of physical objects is constructed from sensations. James's account is noticeably different from the sensationalists of his own day, not to mention the sense-data theorists who followed. And finally, in "The Perception of 'Reality'" James discusses the psychological process of sorting perceived and conceived entities, in effect subjecting ontology to psychologistic treatment. Not only does this anticipate his pure-experience account of his later work, but also the method of approaching the phenomenalist theory explicitly via psychology makes clear the motivation for this unusual metaphysical position.

a) Sensations – not denigrated, but not pure either

In exploring the nature of mind, James found his bedrock in sensations, which he called "first things in the way of consciousness." (656) This is a mixture of the traditional stress on knowledge by acquaintance of empiricism, and the emphasis on understanding mentality as a complex form of reflex action. Sensations, through the stimulation of afferent nerves, are the starting point in the reflex arc. They are what affect infants who possess no language or concepts; they are the raw material of the mind. James calls them "the stable rock" of our thought, stating "conceptual systems which neither began nor left off in sensations would be like bridges without piers." (*ibid.*) As we have seen, James took sensations to be the starting point for conception (both in terms of the images associated with it and the functionally more significant corrections and verifications sensory contact provides.) As a philosophically astute psychologist, James will have to explore how humans gain a sense of the world around them without making the world a Berkelean one of ideas and minds *tout court*, and without postulating a world beyond the cognitive reach of his subjects.

James accordingly adjusts the traditional picture of sensations, denying their 'interiority' while affirming their perspectival nature. (678*ff.*) Using an example we also find with some regularity in Wittgenstein, James notes that to know what a toothache is, "somebody must *have* toothache, to make human knowledge of these matters real." (656) We may have conceptual knowledge of someone else's toothache, but without the direct experience of the sensations constitutive of toothache, our knowledge is akin, James suggests, to a blind man's knowledge that the sky is blue. An interesting corollary of this notion is James's claim that pains create upon first appearance their own 'pain space', into which nothing else can fit. The point is made again and again (p. 235; 304*ff*; 684*ff*; chapter 20 *passim*) that our body forms the primitive seat or

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[83] James's point here is about localized brain activities, and his suggestion is borne out by recent work in Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (FMRI). FMRI scans of the brain confirm what has often been suspected, that in imagining a visual object, or utilizing visual concepts, the primary visual cortex remains inactive. Part of our brain 'gives us news from the eye', other parts generate imaginary or otherwise unpercieved images. James, well aware of so-called 'hysterical blindness' (blindsight) and hallucination, presumably came to his conclusions through the traditional method of comparing damaged brains, not to mention experimentation with hypnosis, interviewing the blindsighted, and himself taking psychotropics.

origin of our sense of space, and sensations get 'situated' over time as the organism distinguishes between sensory modalities, parts of the body, and eventually a larger environment through which bodily movement occurs.

In contrast, the sensations mentioned in previous empiricist works[84] are supposed to be private images, from which we infer the existence of an external world. James sees this as an error: such a sensation is an abstraction, an isolated aspect of a richer sensory scene. (653) Sensations have a native objectivity to them, James argues. A pain simply *affects* an agent; it carries no primitive sense of privacy with it. Moreover, its location in bodily (or topographic) space must be learned.[85] James's ongoing argument is that the familiar distinction between 'inner' and 'outer' events must be built out of sensations as they accrue during early life. As we shall see, he will pursue a similar strategy regarding reality and illusion. In contrast to the 'intellectualists,' James denies sensation is to be degraded as unreliable or ephemeral, nor does he think we infer from our sensations that there is an external world. As will be shown, James takes objective perception to be more an emotive than purely cognitive (or inferential) process. As far as sensations are concerned, in their earliest incarnations sensations give us all the sense of externality we will ever need.

b) Things – how they are built

Having stipulated the meaning of 'sensation' in his philosophy of mind, James addresses perception. This he defines as "the consciousness of particular material things present to sense" (722). Perception differs from sensation, as noted previously, in the relative fullness of associations that accompany the perception of an object. Foremost among the associations of interest to psychologists is the intertwining of the various sensory modalities: perception of a physical object normally involves more than one sense, even if secondary senses are only present via memory. James discusses how experience teaches the subject to combine sensations from discrete senses[86], and combine them:

> So when I get, as now, a brown eye-picture with lines not parallel, and with angles unlike, and call it my big solid rectangular walnut library-table, that picture is not the table. It is not even like the table as the table is for vision, when rightly seen. It is a distorted perspective view of three sides of what I mentally *perceive* (more or less) in its totality and undistorted shape. The back of the table, its square corners, its size, its heaviness, are features of which I am conscious when I look, almost as I am conscious of

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[84] See Locke's *Essay*, bk. 2, ch. xxv, §9; ch. xxiii, §29, both quoted by James. The latter sees Locke arguing that sensation forms "the *boundaries* of our thoughts; beyond which, the mind, whatever efforts it would make, is not able to advance one jot." This is an equivocal example at best. *Cf.* Berkeley, *Principles* §§1-21; Hume, *Treastise*, Bk. 1, sec. 2.

[85] Anticipating a well-known line of thought from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Remarks*, James suggests that regarding a toothache, we "have a distinct pocket for it in our mind, into which it and nothing else will fit." (654-5)

[86] Indeed, James was aware of the rare cases in which sensory modalities are *not* discrete. Thus we see him, at 676*ff.*, discussing what is now known as 'synaesthesia', or the blending of senses.

> its name. The suggestion of the name is of course due to mere custom. But no less is that of the back, the size, weight, squareness, etc. (724)[87]

As will become clear below, James's talk of being conscious of the back of the table during perception has a pragmatic twist. As belief can be sustained habitually in the absence of opposing psychological forces, he can consistently claim to be aware of the back of the table without having current sensory evidence for the belief.

It is important to notice the realistic flavour of James's phenomenalism: unlike sense-data theories, or classic phenomenalism, James's view does not involve inference, nor does he claim that reference to a physical object is a concatenation of claims about sense-data. On the contrary, here we see 'sensa' described relative to objects perceived, they are contrasted with the object *per se*, and thus tables are not seen as changing shape with a change in perspective. The description proceeds the other way around: we naturally construct a perception of the table, and interpret visual sensa as 'perspectives on the table'. (A concomitant James does not mention is the presumable awareness we possess of our own circumlocution of the object in question. The flip side of gauging the flux of visual sensa in terms of the permanence of the table is our own movement around it.) Perception is thus detailed, not as mere 'sensory input plus miscellaneous associative activity in the brain' (*cf.* 663) but as present sensations coupled with remembered sensations (across sensory modalities) and categorization ('integrated into a percept').

Appearance and Reality

This integration is, as one would expect, a selective affair. In this same discussion of perception, James attempts to give a psychological explanation of a durable philosophical dichotomy. He discussed the separation of appearance from reality within the realm of perception, in an attempt to naturalize it that would shape his later radical empiricist writings. In the natural process of combining sensations to form perceptions of objects, a sort of evolutionary selection occurs. As James puts it:

> "Every concrete particular material thing is a conflux of sensible qualities, with which we have become acquainted at various times. Some of these qualities, since they are more constant, interesting, or practically important, we regard as essential constituents of the thing. In a general way, such are the tangible shape, size, mass, etc. Other properties, being more fluctuating, we regard as more or less accidental or inessential. We call the former qualities the reality, the latter its appearances." (724)

James understood the distinction between real and apparent as a function of the subjective process of collating experiences over time. There was no need, he felt, to postulate a reality behind appearances to explain their features. As he wrote in his consideration of 'sciousness', "Between the postulated Matter and the postulated Thinker, the sheet of phenomena would then swing, some of them (the 'realities')

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[87] This passage is a useful example of how for James, we might say, sensations are 'raw', perceptions

pertaining more to the matter, others (the fictions, opinions, and errors) pertaining more to the Thinker." (291). While he rejected many of the assumptions historically operative in philosophical consideration of these matters, James did end up with a picture sharing one feature: errors and illusions occupy a 'subjective space' within the larger field of experience, interiority thus becoming associated with fiction and unreality. Not even illusions appear especially subjective: they are for James simply instances of "figured consciousness" (728) in which subsequent sensory experience fails to correspond to expectation.

c) Reality – the emotional attachment to objects

But emotional attachment to oneself (variously construed) may counterbalance this conclusion about the exteriority of sensations and perceived objects. In "The Perception of 'Reality'" James argues that things are real insofar as they are attended to by the thinker, and by this he means they command our attention, they link up with our personal interests. (This is perhaps the most prominent evidence of James's pragmatism prior to 1898.) Worlds are built up due to patterns of attention, and our ability to relate parts of experience. This notion of 'worldmaking' (to borrow Nelson Goodman's term) is the outgrowth of James's psychological account of reality and belief.

James treats 'reality' as a relation cognized by the mind, and interestingly, he does not proceed epistemologically, presuming a 'real world' and then attempting to explain how we gain truth and detect error. This he surely could have done given his provisional mind/world dualism stated in the preface of *Principles*. (6) James instead pursues the topic from the subject's point of view, exploring the psychological functions that contribute to that very picture upon which the psychologist depends. Thus James's chapter begins by noting the psychological function that yields a sense of reality:

> "Everyone knows the difference between imagining a thing and believing in its existence, between supposing a proposition and acquiescing in its truth. In the case of acquiescence or belief, the object is not only apprehended by the mind, but is held to have reality. Belief is thus the mental state or function of cognizing reality." (913)

This function of believing in objects present to mind is not best characterized as part of our intellectual nature; on the contrary, "[i]n its inner nature belief, or the sense of reality, is a sort of feeling more allied to the emotions than to anything else." (*ibid.*) True to his Peircean influences, James claims belief is characterized by a cessation of intellectual activity and the beginning of action. (914) This leads to another pragmatic conclusion: "The true opposites of belief, psychologically considered, are doubt and inquiry, not disbelief." (914) James (not completely parenthetically) discusses how this emotion is subdued by alcohol and drugs. We may say that for James, the phenomenon of 'taking something to be real' is a very visceral experience.

'cooked'. *Cf.* Chapter one, p. 41, above.

James considers the etiology of the sense of reality, its emergence from the simple presence of an object to thought, and here, as in "Sensation" and "Discrimination and Comparison", James speculates as to the qualities of an infant's first experience.[88] Out of the blooming, buzzing confusion, some things impress upon us their reality, and we select them from out of the flux, by contrasting them with less interesting concomitants. It is important to note how this chapter resembles the picture of experience given in 1904-5. Here James writes about an imaginary candle and its differing from real candles, in the same manner as in section 6 of "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" The imagined candle gains a sense of unreality as we notice conflicts between it and 'real' candles. Regarding this conflict, James writes: "when we now think of [the dream-candle] incompatibly with our other ways of thinking it, then we must choose which way to stand by", and this choice leads to the categorizing of candles as real or unreal, things or fancies. (920) "The whole distinction of real and unreal" James argues, "the whole psychology of belief, disbelief, and doubt, is thus grounded on two mental facts—first, that we are liable to think differently of the same [subject matter]; and second, that when we have done so, we can choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard." (*ibid.*) Ontology thus is explained as a categorizing activity of a fruitful mind: we distinguish between 'real' and 'apparent' things, qualities and relations because we are incessantly reprocessing experience, rendering it in different patterns, and we need to select some ways of looking at things and reject others. James suggests the result is the creation of two groups of mental objects, those pointing to real things and relations, and a kind of mental limbo where "footless fancies dwell."[89] The causal powers or force behind this activity is left vague, which is evidence that this is a phenomenalist account, though James gives sufficient evidence for one retreat to the psychologist's dualism, and claim that both the 'outer' objects and the 'inner' impulses are at work in worldmaking.

James's pluralism shows its head here, and his account quickly blossoms from a simple real/unreal dualism to a description of the many worlds a normal agent constructs. He concludes that philosophically speaking, an investigator must take account of all worlds, not just the 'real' ones. It is noteworthy that this account also involves pragmatism. They key attitudes of doubt and belief, along with selective attention, are connected to this story of how various worlds are constituted and discriminated. His enumeration (*Principles*, 921, reproduced above as Appendix one, chapter one) of worlds includes the sensory or physical world (what we now call the 'manifest image'); its intellectual replacement, the 'scientific image'; the conceptual world of logic and mathematics and other normative conceptions; a world of so-called 'idols of the tribe' which we may take to be a world of common sense and common prejudices; the supernatural worlds that form part of a religious cosmology; the world of one's individual opinions; and the world of "sheer madness and vagary". Given James's theory of the self, it is important to distinguish between these

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[88] The relevant passages occur at 462 and 657. James also uses this thought experiment in *Some Problems of Philosophy*, ch. 4 and *Pragmatism*, lecture five.
[89] The phrase appears to be a line of poetry quoted by James, with no author attributed.

last two. Most people, he would argue, do not take everything that enters one's mind as part of one's subjective life—we tend to think our opinions are more real than our momentary fancies.

Many of these worlds will vary greatly in terms of content from one individual to another, while others, such as the world of science or mathematics, will show greater invariance. (The world of sensation will show an intermediate amount of variation: certainly changes of perspective will manifest themselves, but the contiguity of two perceivers will lend a degree of stability, as will the duration of sensations.) "Each thinker," James writes, "has dominant habits of attention." (923) Individuals will accordingly select from among their worlds which is most real for them. For each person pragmatic factors constrain this activity: even if we ignore the problems of communication with others, subjective or private use of notions that contradict our senses will prove frustrating. This leads James to talk of the "paramount reality of sensations" (927), which should not be taken as a wholehearted endorsement of the manifest image over its competitors. James argues that while sensations, due to our physiology, make strong demands upon our attention, other objects which connect up with our emotive life in robust ways may supercede the senses, or cause us to reinterpret them. But these objects must have a connection with the life of the thinker, thus we find James considering the scientific image: "Conceived molecular vibrations, e.g., are by the physicist judged more real than felt warmth, because so intimately related to al those other facts of motion in the world which he has made his special study." (929)

Conceptual realities may, by their breadth of application, their novelty, or their rarity, supervene upon sensory experience and transform it, causing us to regard that which is 'before our eyes' as a little less real. But James has not abandoned his earlier theory of conception: "no mere floating conception," he insists, "no mere disconnected rarity, ever displaces vivid things or permanent things from our belief. A conception, to prevail, must *terminate* in the world of orderly sensible experience." (*ibid.*) A page later James offers a conclusion: "Sensible objects are thus either our realities or the tests of our realities. Conceived objects must show sensible effects or else be disbelieved." (930)[90] For persons with certain rarefied educations and interests, theoretical entities or systems of thought can come to possess a strong sense of reality, provided they strike roots into the emotional life of those who consider them.

Ideas, ontologically speaking, may differ *toto caelo* from sensations, and the failure to recognize this could be considered the fatal flaw of classical empiricism. However, psychologically considered, to have reality our ideas must resonate with the thinker as non-illusory sensations do. Affirming that an idea is real is not predicating existence[91] of it, but it is the emergence over time of new relations between that idea, the thinker entertaining it, and the larger world(s) of which that thinker has knowledge. James compares this

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[90] As an *obiter dictum* James comments, "Strange mutual dependence this, in which the appearance needs the reality in order to exist, but the reality needs the apearance in order to be known!" (*ibid.*) This is an uncredited reiteration of Gorgias' fragment five.

process of the emergence of relations to the navigating through space to arrive at distant objects. It is a case of exploring the fringes accompanying an object, as James makes explicit in his analysis of a belief about the past:

> When I believe that some prehistoric savage chipped this flint, for example, the reality of the savage and of his act makes no direct appeal either to my sensation, emotion, or volition. What I mean by my belief in it is simply my dim sense of a *continuity* between the long dead savage and his doings and the present world of which the flint forms a part. It is pre-eminently a case for applying our doctrine of the 'fringe'. When I think of the savage with one fringe of relationship, I believe in him; or with another one (as, e.g., if I should class him with 'scientific vagaries' in general), I disbelieve him. (947)

It is these smooth transitions from the sensory scene to our conceptual knowledge of the larger world, and further scenes in turn, that constitute the reality of most of the contents of the larger universe the philosopher/psychologist examines. James ends the passage just quoted by claiming "[t]he word 'real' itself is, in short, a fringe."

d) Continuity, conterminousness and the 'Specious Present'

A typical criticism of phenomenalism is that the position leaves us with a piecemeal world, where the coherence of the phenomenal scene lacks explanation, and is contingent upon the inferences of individuals, who must construct a scene out of sense-data. James's use of fringes and other metaphors of continuity is meant to circumvent this criticism. Given neural holism, the holism of sensory scenes and his general emphasis on the context of confirmation of belief, this emphasis is not out of character. In "A World of Pure Experience" James stresses the 'conterminousness' of two knowers—meaning their vicarious form of continuity granted by virtue of an intermediate state or experience—that he believes saves radical empiricism from solipsistic interpretations. This was part of James's meaning when he stressed the 'reality of conjunctive relations', in opposition to empiricists who emphasized the discrete aspects of experience, and concluded that judgements of similarity were purely subjective prejudices. Given a universe where various kinds of similarity and connection were cognized, it would not seem strange to suggest that two minds came into contact with one another, especially if the metaphor of 'coming into contact' gets cashed out.

This is precisely what James did. He discussed the important role played by the recognition of facial gestures, speech, and pointing to common objects in coming to a non-solipsistic point of view, which he called 'natural realism'.[92] Thus he argues:

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[91] On James's handling of this familiar Kantian issue, see pp. 925*ff*.

[92] This mention of realism does not undermine my thesis here. James talks of realism in three contexts throughout his work: in *Principles*, as a working hypothesis, in *Pragmatism*, as 'epistemological realism', and here, in his most phenomenalistic essay. The latter two cases are strategic uses, to subdue critics who would find his theory of percpetion or knowledge too profane to be plausible.

> [Y]our hand lays hold of one end of a rope and my hand lays hold of the other end. We pull against each other. Can our two hands be mutual objects in this experience, and the rope not be mutual also?... Your objects are over and over again the same as mine. If I ask you *where* some object of yours is, our old Memorial Hall, for example, you point to *my* Memorial Hall with *your* hand which *I* see. If you alter an object in your world, put out a candle, for example, when I am present, *my* candle *ipso facto* goes out." (ERE 38-9)

His footnote to this passage is very revealing of his animus against Berkelean idealism: "The notion that our objects are inside our respective heads is not seriously defensible, so I pass it by." James thinks our bodily activity belies the thesis that solipsism is true, though he does adhere to the familiar thesis that the contents of our minds are mostly private and do not directly form part of the phenomena that other agents experience. But insofar as we talk to one another, communicating conceptions and leading one another to specific perceptions, our minds assuredly do make a difference in each other's lives, and contact may be said to occur. "Practically, then, our minds meet in a world of objects which they share in common, which would still be there, if one or several of the minds were destroyed." (ERE 39) James thought the problem of other minds was amenable to the same treatment as the subject/object dualism he overcame in "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?":

> "If one and the same experience can figure twice, once in a mental and once in a physical context,...one does not see why it might not figure thrice, or four times, or any number of times, by running into as many different mental contexts, just as the same point, lying at their intersection, can be continued into many different lines." (*ibid.*)

One refinement of this argument that can be found in James's notes from this period involves the relevance of kinaesthetic sensations, as opposed to tactile or visual input. Thus we find James writing: "The visual arm, I postulate, is (as a reality) common to me and to you. The felt arm is mine alone, and never becomes common. The *cause* of this difference is physical: The arm physically stimulates your sight apparatus but only *my* kinaesthetic apparatus, not yours. Can other cases of co- and ex- be similarly accounted for?"[93] He continues, exhibiting his own vertigo during this attempt to think originally about the question:

> "It would require the common object to work on both minds, while the unshared contents worked only on single minds. But what does the notion of "working" signify here? The rest of my inner biography does n't work, either directly or indirectly, on my mind, it *is* my mind. The core of this mind is my intra-somatic feelings, to which my percepts accrete, and the mass of which they enrich by leaving memories." (*ibid.*)

This is part of a complex story of how phenomenalism is related to pragmatism: insofar as the two are mutually supporting, pragmatism sanctions the looser talk of 'identical sensations' and 'the same physical object', but the discriminations we may make regarding the components of these things allows us to argue that even in cases of well-founded agreement, *e.g.*, sitting beside one another listening to a symphony, we may claim that despite this near-identity we really do not have exactly the same experience. This gains further support when we consider how the private aspects of experience colour our attention, our

discriminative capacities, and our interests. Phenomenalism provides epistemology with a purely immanent stage; pragmatism allows us to redescribe the appearance/reality distinction within phenomena, providing phenomenalism with a workable divide between veridical perception and illusion. This is how they reinforce one another. But viewed from the interests of the philosopher, pragmatism may rob phenomenalism of some needed rigour.

Phenomenalism regularly raises questions about other minds and the reality of the external world, two problems that also plague solipsism. Regarding the second of these problems, we may say that given James's reluctance to postulate a stable, transempircial realm as a cause or ground of the phenomena experienced (a corollary of his indeterminism, see below, section six) leaves him with a piecemeal world, and that even pointing to the continuous nature of experience does not free his view of this flaw. Phenomenalism does not explain how experience 'hangs together', and seemingly leaves us to navigate through a less real world, with phenomena deceiving us into thinking they are more substantial than they are. This point of view can arise from a protopicture, which reinforces the notion that phenomenalism is *ipso facto* a theory of perceptual counterfeits. (See Figure 2-1.)

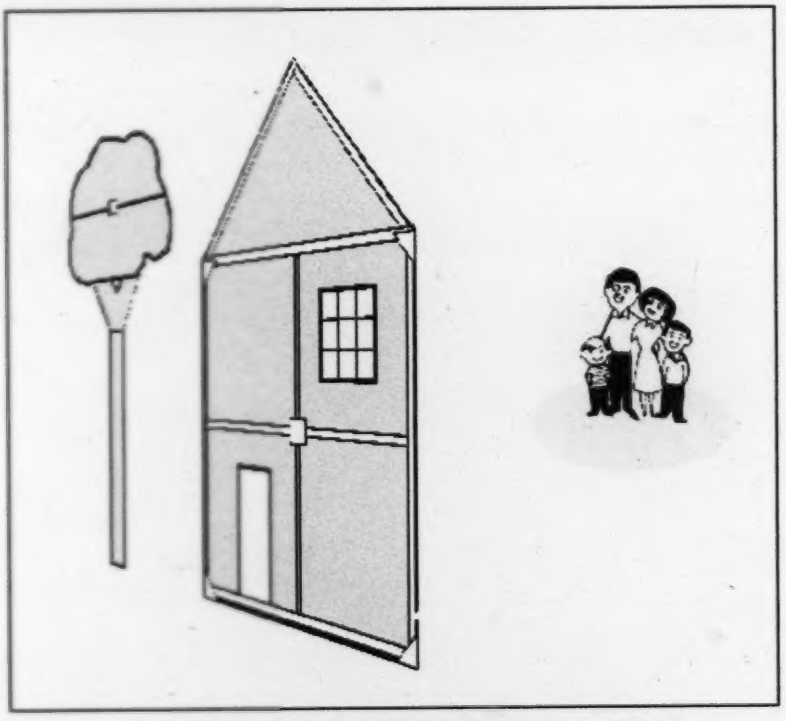

Figure 2-1: The common proto-picture of phenomenalism

[93] The "Miller-Bode" notebooks, in *Manuscript Essays and Notes*, p. 94.

The temptation is to view the phenomenal world as the real world *minus* the objects therein. This is not how James saw things, as I hope is clear at this point. James saw the manifest image as the arena of verification, moment to moment, for experiencing subjects. Out of the visual and other sensory scenes we discriminate among our perceptions, testing those about which we feel doubt, separating verities from illusions by their intransigence or duration, or the confirmation one sensory mode gives another. (Look back at the diagram, and imagine one of the viewers knocking on the door.) The same process occurs with our concepts: the stability of our meanings finds verification through employment, and ultimately sensations corroborate not only that our concepts work, but that we mean what we think we mean. James suggests the body provides a crucial threshold of experience, dividing it into a rough analogue of the familiar distinction between the 'inner' and 'outer' worlds. Pains are private experiences, but with public locations: I can connect up my 'pain space' with 'public space' and point to my sore arm to inform another. My thoughts, if unexpressed, remain private and unconnected with any space. Objects that are not my body exist in a public perceptual space, where one person can have the experience of another by assuming the latter's precise point of view.

Solipsism arises, even in James's agnostic phenomenalism, as a serious possibility once one beings to regard a person's body like the house in our diagram. As James says, our bodies form the perceptual termini for our interlocutors. But he insists that we have contact here—it is more like a border than a boundary, as he describes it. Thus the individual will operates through bodily actions (James notes that strictly speaking the will's direct effects are upon attention (947)), and while we may notice that 'inside' our minds the will can (apparently) manipulate objects, while 'outside' objects do not respond to our will, the body itself, this border between what is 'mind-dependant' and 'mind-independent' is also subject to voluntary control. To state the obvious, this is how we interact with objects in that 'outer' realm. In his dismissal of solipsism in "A World of Pure Experience" James points to this commonality about volition, perhaps to dismiss the view he could not take seriously: the notion that we are isolated in our minds, and have only the most tenuous of relations with the objects we perceive. James was, above all, a philosopher who stressed the engaged, active character of human life—a picture of that life as spent seated in a dark theatre watching distant actions unfold on a screen would not have been a live option for him.

The self-sufficiency of the phenomenal scene derives from one further aspect worth considering. James's discussion of the 'specious present', a kind of temporal bubble within which experience occurs, is well known in our own time. "The moment at which I speak is already far from me." Or so says an unknown poet quoted by James in *Principles*. In his treatment of "The Perception of Time" (chapter XV), James introduces this notion of the 'specious present', which he borrows from E. R. Clay. Time as experienced, or as it is "practically cognized", according to James (following Clay), "is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions of time." (574) The felt present has a duration, and new experiences enter into it as older ones fade away, thus

lending this moment a continuous quality. This notion of the specious present, while downgraded to epiphenomenal status by many philosophers writing about time[94], has found a new life as 'the remembered present' in Gerald Edelman's theory of consciousness, which not accidentally resembles this view found in *Principles*.

Unsurprisingly, James ties the phenomenon of the specious present to brain-processes; that is, he gives a preliminary account of how the physiological data of time-perception constrain the notion of a specious present. (James claims it ranges, for example, from a few seconds to around a minute, due to experimental data by other researchers on the limits of human time-interval perception and short-term memory.) The specious present is a kind of sensational core vis-à-vis time, of which we are constantly aware. James attempts to explain this as a kind of convergence of brain states:

> Part of the complexity [of every concrete state of mind] is the echo of the objects just past, and, in a less degree, perhaps, the foretaste of those just to arrive. Objects fade out of consciousness slowly. If the present thought is of A B C D E F G, the next one will be of B C D E F G H, and the one after that of C D E F G H I—the lingerings of the past dropping successively away, and the incomings of the future making up the loss. These lingerings of old objects, these incomings of new, are the germs of memory and expectation, the retrospective and the prospective sense of time. (571)

This notion of the specious present involving both a taste of recent past and future makes sense when you think of the brain as processing incoming sensory signals while executing motor programmes. If I am, *e.g.*, throwing a punch, the feeling of tension that began the programme is as much felt as the intense anticipation of hitting the target. In many motor programmes our feelings and images are tied up with the goal, even in earlier phases of performance. Expectation blends (optimally) into fulfillment, and thence into memory.

We construct around this core our familiar notions of the past and the future, which, as horizons or vistas can be as distant as our imagination and education permit.[95] As for the conceptual version of the present moment, typically this is conceived in a manner following geometry, as a line without breadth separating the past from the future. For James, neither this line nor the two realms it demarcates are 'lived time';

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[94] See *Problems of Space and Time*, ed. J. J. C. Smart (MacMillan, 1964) and *The Human Experience of Time*, by Charles M. Sherover (New York: New York UP, 1975) for an overview of philosophic opinions. Cf. E. Harris, *The Reality of Time* (SUNY press, 1988).

[95] On the need to situate our native perceptions of time into a larger order, cf. Kant's discussion of the conceiving of distant spatio-temporal contexts in *The Critique of [the Faculty] of Judgement*, §26: "But now the mind listens to the voice of reason which, for every given magnitude—even for those that can never be entirely apprehended, although (in sensible representation) they are judged as entirely given—requires totality. Reason consequently desires comprehension in *one* intuition, and so the joint *presentation* of all these members of a progressively increasing series. It does not even exempt the infinite (space and past time) from this requirement; it rather renders it unavoidable to think the infinite (in the judgment of common reason) as *entirely given* (according to its totality)." (Trans.: J. H. Bernard, p. 93.)

rather, they for the conceptual backdrop within which we can make sense of temporal succession.[96] Clay too was of this opinion, claiming that "[o]mitting the specious present, [time] consists of three … nonentities, the past which does not exist, the future which does not exist, and their conterminus the present: the faculty from which it proceeds lies to us in the fiction of the specious present."[97] Talk of fictions and nonentities is a somewhat inaccurate way of describing the view of James, as I shall momentarily show. But for now it is important to note the role the specious present plays in conscious life.

Just as our body forms a spatial origin or center, from which our mature sense of space grows, so does the felt moment constitute a kind of temporal locus, a kind of 'permanent now': the specious present's "*content* is in a constant flux," according to James, with "events dawning into its forward end as fast as they fade out of its rearward one…. Meanwhile, the specious present, the intuited duration, stands permanent, like the rainbow on the waterfall, with its own quality unchanged by the events that stream through it." (593) The specious present as the origin of phenomenal time takes on a quite different character once we begin to subject our memories and other experiences to conceptual organization. A conceptual sense of 'real' or objective time supplants the native centrality of phenomenal time, much as our sense of bodily space is reinterpreted as within a larger, geographical space. Thus:

> "The relation of conceived to intuited time is just like that of the fictitious space pictured on the flat back-scene of a theatre to the actual space of the stage. The objects painted on the former (trees, columns, houses in a receding street, etc.) carry back the series of similar objects solidly placed upon the latter, and we think we see things in a continuous perspective, when we really see thus only a few of them and imagine that we see the rest. The chapter which lies before us deals with the way in which we paint the remote past, as it were, upon a canvas in our memory, and yet often imagine that we have direct vision of its depths." (605)[98]

Whether we consider perception, the sense of physical (or somatic) location, or the eternal 'now' of the specious present, James's variation of phenomenalism consistently blends 'impressions' and 'ideas', though he never identifies one with the other. What I have been calling James's phenomenalism is actually a modified version of sensationalism (it is non-atomic, which is a departure from earlier models) *plus* a kind of conceptual 'shell' that augments and broadens our experience, broadly conceived, and acts as an interpreter of sensation, and a means not only of ordering the past flux, but of controlling future

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[96] Readers curious about the details of these brain structures may profit from Edelman's examination of the neurological structures contributing to the cognition of the specious or remembered present and memory more generally, in his *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*, pp. 101-110.

[97] Quoted by James in *Principles*, p. 574.

[98] A similar comment can be found in "Humanism and Truth" [1904]: "As in those circular panoramas, where a real foreground of dirt, grass, bushes, rocks and a broken-down cannon is enveloped by a canvas picture of sky and earth and of a raging battle, continuing the foreground so cunningly that the spectator can detect no joint; so these conceptual objects, added to our present perceptual reality, fuse with it into the whole universe of our belief." (*Meaning of Truth*, p. 54.)

experience.[99] We do this through learning and planning, two dimensions of human experience that have come under intense scientific investigation in modern psychology. The specious present and its role in mature thought is an example of James's fully-formed 'conceptual phenomenalism.' James's treatment of time and memory shows similarity to the approach favoured by Wittgenstein, and James's thoughts can go a long way towards demystifying Wittgenstein's remarks on memory in particular.

This multi-layered approach has parallels in his pragmatic writings. Where pragmatism divides beliefs into the ambulatory and saltatory variety, Jamsian psychology treats concepts and percepts as components of a similar system distinguishing our higher-level consciousness of the world from our immediate sensory awareness. While our consciousness is distinct in that it contains a conceptual component (or, an ability to perform conceptions), it is not constituted by concepts alone. James's view of higher-level (or human) consciousness is that of a combination of perceptual and conceptual experiences. (Along with the notion of a specious present, Edelman preserves this way of viewing consciousness, hence his appearance in the previous chapter.)

The Spectre of Phenomenalism

For phenomenalists—though significantly, not for their critics—it is true that 'nothing is hidden.' (This term has become something of a popular slogan in the secondary literature—it derives from *Investigations* §435). Even the postulates we construct (unwittingly) to organize the plenum of sensation are real, and are nothing more than their appearance, as this manifests itself in terms of function. One feature of 'the given' that is overlooked is its affective quality, or situation more properly, in our lived experience. This feature connects concepts with our activities and interests. Concepts *are* their employment in a certain sense: we do phenomenalist metaphysics poorly when we neglect this feature of their cognitive environment, and we do semantics poorly as well. Semantically, searching for something beyond the sign in its projective relationship to the world and ourselves is a source of confusion. For James, concepts are real, their meanings are as determinate or indeterminate as our needs dictate, and the meaning of a concept is to be found in the manner of deployment, if you will, of that concept. Its function of 'leading towards' a sensory situation, or another sign, or a subjective satisfaction, is the meaning of the concept, *tout court*.

In sense-data theories, the assumption is that the sensation is peeled away from the object, and that the object is inferred to be the cause or ground or referent of the data. Hilary Putnam points out that James's

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[99] Indeed, readers familiar with the UNIX computer operating system might find a fruitful analogy here: sensation is the 'kernel' of lived experience, the place where things ultimately get verified or rejected; as language- and concept-users, we employ a 'shell' to issue commands and sort incoming information. Just as UNIX users can choose from a variety of shells, we can employ different conceptual schemes, each scheme being subject to the pragmatic constraints of efficiency, flexibility, power, and of course, connection with our sensational core.

theory, because of its anti-representationalism and anti-mentalism, takes the object itself as the datum, thus making James's view a form of what was known at the time as direct, or to use James's term, 'natural' realism.[100] Of course, this way of expressing it puts the cart before the horse: from a first-person perspective, the sensory experience is neither a 'physical object', nor a 'subjective sensation' until subsequent experiences have 'taken up' the sensory experience and processed it one way or the other.

James was fairly consistent in claiming that objects were simply the sum of their perceived qualities. Like most phenomenalists, he interpreted this broadly (to the point of triviality), thus any experience that seemed to contradict the received idea of what an object was, was simply counted as corrective evidence that revised our idea. James was also clear that this was a metaphysical position, a prejudice if you like, and its major justification was parsimony (or the subjective satisfaction caused by it). A further reason for James's phenomenalism may be found in "The Stream of Thought". There James says our words name the center of experience, ignoring the thousand or so dimly felt concomitants. (234) An 'experience language' would presumably capture the phenomenal detritus, and as an empirical scientist, James would see this as desirable. (Wittgenstein's criticism of this idea is—I hope to show—a pragmatic one: in essence he will ask, what *use* could such a modification of language possibly have?) But perhaps the best clue as to why James embraced an agnostic phenomenalism as part of his empirical outlook can be found in our final topic for consideration.

(6) Indeterminism and a Pluralistic Universe

James's well-known commitment to free will makes determinism a difficult thesis to embrace. However, biographical sources are clear enough that the option was a live one for him. This is because of his strong commitment to a scientific view of the world. But in the end, determinism could not win James over, as it did Wright, Holmes and Peirce, the philosophical friends of his early adulthood. James, from the 1870s on, incorporated a kind of indeterminism about the universe into his *Weltanschauung*. Given the ideas developed in this exposition thus far (particularly the nominalism, pragmatism and phenomenalism), it is easier to see James's view as less a dogmatic clinging to the notion of human freedom, than as an attempt to replace deterministic realism with a fallibilistic world-view. In fact, one may argue that (in the *Principles* at least) James would allow one to distinguish between real and apparent freedom of the will, in order to join hands with deterministic scientists in accurately describing the phenomenon of volition.

It is of course possible to be a fallibilist without believing that the world in itself is not fully determinate. (Peirce's fallibilism is proof of this.) But James thought determinism suffered from conceptual confusions

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[100] See Putnam, "William James's Theory of Perception" in James Conant, ed., *Realism With a Human Face*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.) See especially p. 242ff., where Putnam, as I see it, imports his own way of approaching the problem of the external world into James.

(he explored this in "The Dilemma of Determinism") and argued that it was admissible and reasonable to consider the universe as a whole as not quite set in its way. Given his holism, if one part of reality can be shown to be 'underdetermined', this will stain—however faintly—the greater whole. Human beings and human knowledge served as the necessary ingredients in his argument.

Human beings were examples of indeterminacy for James because of their extreme complexity. In "Great Men and Their Environment" [1880] and its sequel, James argued that humans are too complex to be fully explained by the causal forces surrounding them. He likens 'great men' to the spontaneous variations of Darwinian biology, and argues that original individuals "change [the environment's] constitution, just as the advent of a new zoological species changes the faunal and floral equilibrium of the region in which it appears."[101] This does not have to happen often to have wide-ranging effects. (Hence James could say (*op. cit.*, p. 184) without inconsistency that the majority of us are mostly habitual and unoriginal in our thought.) As he had argued in his conclusion to *Principles*, the brain itself was a constant source of novelty: it is the most complex thing we know of, and it receives a ceaseless stream of complex signals from the outside world. But these signals are subject to even more complicated and interrelated processes. Any prediction we could make regarding the outcome of human behaviour would be a weak induction based on a past which does not resemble the present with sufficient exactness to allow us to gauge the directions a 'hair trigger' process like human consciousness is about to veer.

It is a somewhat more original claim to insist that epistemology supports indeterminism. James took knowledge to be a public, non-subjective event in the world, as an exercise of a conceptual activity. From this it was an easy matter to conclude that given human knowledge changes, grows and reinterprets the universe, it also materially adds to it. As we learn more about our surroundings, we unify what was originally for us a chaotic universe. Thus James ended "A World of Pure Experience" by arguing that "the unity of the world is on the whole undergoing increase. The universe continually grows in quantity by new experiences that graft themselves upon the older mass; but these very new experiences often help the mass to a more consolidated form." (ERE, 43.) Since he took the past and future to be 'conceptual backdrops', leading us to new experiences, it is not a far-fetched claim to suggest their mutability, and since the conceptual habits we possess colour the new experiences we undergo, even sensory verification has a tinge of corruptibility about it. But perhaps James's frankest statement of indeterminism involves his recognition that it is the essence of the human condition to have partial knowledge of the world. Even the critic who insists that our fallible knowledge gives us little reason to disregard the determinist's thesis is, James argues, unable to do more than point to the fallibility of others. "If the whole process of experience should terminate at that instant, there would be no otherwise known independent reality with which *his* thought might be compared." So James wrote in 1909. His continuation gives a fuller view of his meaning:

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[101] Reprinted in *The Will to Believe*, [1897] p. 170.

> "The immediate in experience is always provisionally in this situation. The humanism, for instance, which I see and try so hard to defend, is the completest truth attained from my point of view up to date. But, owing to the fact that all experience is a process, no point of view can ever be the last one. Every one is insufficient and off its balance, and responsible to later points of view than itself. You, occupying some of these later points in your own person, and believing in the reality of others, will not agree that my point of view sees truth positive, truth timeless, truth that counts, unless they verify and confirm what it sees. You generalize this by saying that any opinion, however satisfactory, can count positively and absolutely as true only so far as it agrees with a standard beyond itself; and if you then forget that this standard perpetually grows up endogenously inside the web of the experiences, you may carelessly go on to say that what distributively holds of each experience, holds also collectively of all experience, and that experience as such and in its totality owes whatever truth it may be possessed-of to its correspondence with absolute realities outside of its own being. This evidently is the popular and traditional position. From the fact that finite experiences must draw support from one another, philosophers pass to the notion that experience *überhaupt* must need an absolute support. The denial of such a notion by humanism lies probably at the root of most of the dislike which it incurs." (*The Meaning of Truth*, p. 55)

We may postulate a determinate world outside our temporal existence, but this will be subject to James's familiar pragmatic criteria. What would it accomplish? Whom would it comfort? James certainly preferred to do without such a philosophic anodyne.

E Pluribus Plurimum: James's Robust Ontology

For readers of *The Will to Believe*, *Pragmatism* or the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, not to mention *A Pluralistic Universe*, James's pluralism may seem capricious, more of a concession to his romanticism than his tough-minded self. However, the view that the world was an irreducible plurality has its source in a psychological theory of ontology. This is developed in "The Perception of 'Reality'" (explored above), one of the more philosophical chapters of *Principles*. There James argues for a variety of worlds, shifting with our attention, each gaining 'air time' based on its connections with our needs. Reduction to a single world, whether a materialistic monism or the Absolute Idealism then current, would seem to James both psychologically odd[102] and risky. To reduce the universe to the physical world (*i.e.*, materialism) one would have to give some of our more real experiences an unreal or illusory quality. James was especially concerned about the denigration of our affective feelings. This could be seen in *Principles* in his denial of the 'conscious-automaton' theory. In "The Sentiment of Rationality" James argued that "for a philosophy to succeed on a universal scale it must define the future *congruously with our spontaneous powers*." (*The Will to Believe*, p. 70.) By this he meant that any view that required us to rationally deny what we viscerally feel would be doomed to failure as a perspective actually adopted in life. "A philosophy may be unimpeachable in other respects, but either of two defects will be fatal to its universal acceptance." The first of these James identifies as that which chafes against our dearest values, and gives Schopenhauer as an

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[102] Though it may be more technically accurate to say 'pathological', I wish to avoid poisoning the well.

example of an author whose pessimism will fail due to this lack of harmony with readers. His second target is materialism:

> "But a second and worse defect in a philosophy ... is to give [readers] no object whatever to press against. A philosophy whose principle is so incommensurate with our most intimate powers as to deny them all relevancy in universal affairs, as to annihilate their motives at one blow, will be even more unpopular than pessimism. ... This is why materialism will always fail of universal adoption, however well it may fuse things into an atomistic unity, however clearly it may prophesy the future eternity." (*ibid.*, pp. 70-71)[103]

It was for James a psychological matter what metaphysical picture we adopt, and the greater the oversimplification of the variety of 'things' we attend to and utilize, the less useful or healthy he took that system to be. James viewed philosophical commitments to the principle of sufficient reason or universal causation as "*postulates of rationality*, not propositions of fact. If nature *did* obey them, she *would* be *pro tanto* more intelligible; and we seek meanwhile so to conceive her phenomena as to show that she does obey them." (1263) In a noteworthy footnote in *Principles*, he remarked, "perhaps the most influential of all these postulates is that the nature of the world must be such that sweeping statements may be made about it." (*ibid.*) This is one more reason to regard James's empiricism as a form of agnosticism: apart from gaining self-knowledge when we uncover these metaphysical postulates, James does not think he has warrant to say what is 'fundamental' about experience—nor is there much to be gained by saying it. Our ways of grouping things, or of following connections cognized among them, depend on our temporary purposes; ontology thus resembles more an attempt to describe the contents of a kaleidoscope than listing the ingredients of the world.[104] As far as pluralism goes, "all we are required to admit as the constitution of reality is what we ourselves find empirically realized in every minimum of finite life."[105] Thus, the subjective moments, the reveries and fancies, of every conscious being forms part of what James occasionally called 'the multiverse.'

James's agnosticism regarding ontology is reiterated in *Pragmatism*. Even here, where he is not dealing explicitly with radical empiricism, he underscores the neutrality of the pragmatic method on the 'ultimate' grounds of usefulness. Thus he distances pragmatism from positivism and materialism:

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[103] Though he does not acknowledge the fact, James's point here is deeply indebted to Schopenhauer. The failure of materialism, or the *Welt als Vorstellung*, is that there is nowhere within that picture for the human will to apply itself. (Hence the need to complement it with the *Welt als Wille*.) Also worth noting in this passage from 1879 is how much James's criticism of materialism resembles Moore's famous attack on the Absolute Idealists' conception of time as unreal. See "The Refutation of Idealism" [1903] in Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, pp. 1-30.

[104] A good account of the point about temporary categorization can be found in "The Place of Affectional Facts in a World of Pure Experience", Chapter 5 in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. The kaleidoscope simile is found in *Principles*, 239.

[105] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 145.

> "[P]ragmatism, devoted though she be to facts, has no such materialistic bias as ordinary empiricism labors under. Moreover, she has no objection whatever to the realizing of abstractions, so long as you get about among particulars with their aid and they actually carry you somewhere. Interested in no conclusions but those which our minds and our experiences work out together, she has no *a priori* prejudices against theology." (*Pragmatism*, lecture two, p. 40)

When considering this issue of pragmatism's 'open door', James's personal trait of toleration raises hermeneutic questions requiring careful thought. One must take pains to distinguish between a view James holds personally, holds professionally, and one he generally thinks cogent but does not hold at all. In a 1911 essay that remains one of the most perceptive pieces written about James, A. O. Lovejoy distinguished between James the man, his philosophy, and James the philosopher, or what Lovejoy called "The man in the philosophy".[106]

As for embracing the scientific image as demarcating nature's joints, something one might expect given the position adopted in *Principles*, those looking for a straightforward form of physicalism will be disappointed in James. In his view, science is not a simple reflection of the phenomenal order of experience; it radically reorganizes that flow:

> "The order of scientific thought is quite incongruent either with the way in which reality exists or with the way in which it comes before us....We break the solid plenitude of fact into separate essences, conceive generally what only exists particularly, and by our classifications leave nothing in its natural neighborhood, but separate the contiguous, and join what the poles divorce." (1230-1)

This is in contrast to the manifest world of perception, where "[w]hat we experience, what *comes before us*, is a chaos of fragmentary impressions interrupting each other; what we *think* is an abstract system of hypothetical data and laws." (1231) Scientific thoughts are special in their detachment from our more subjective, individual interests, and in their congruence with physical experiences. But neither the scientific picture nor a purely sensational influx will be enough. Existential constraints reign in both of these worlds: while we cannot view the world as science portrays it during our extracurricular hours, neither can we live a human life in the 'quasi-chaos' of raw sensation.[107]

This is the underlying picture of the universe as radical empiricism conceives it: the determinate features we detect in it are not exhaustive of nature, and our own activity adds to the total of which we must take account. Furthermore, ontologies are human schema, connected to our needs and ends, part of our biological existence, and changing as human societies adapt and alter form. This underlying picture is a backdrop against which the sheets of phenomena may be allowed to swing back and forth, free of any transcendent supports.

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[106] See Lovejoy, "William James as Philosopher" in *The Thirteen Pragmatisms*.
[107] In the latter case James suggested physiological reasons why we cannot have 'pure' experience in the concrete sense of the term. See "The Thing and Its Relations", in ERE, 46.

Conclusion: The Trail of the Human Serpent

One might struggle in vain to find a good name for James's overall worldview. Though he never identified his own position with the term 'humanism,' James was sufficiently fond of it to give it pride of place along with 'pragmatism' as a general view whose time, he thought, had come. And while 'radical empiricism' nicely conveys the fact that James saw his own work as a reworking and extending of traditional empiricism, it does not stress the central role of being human in his *Weltanschauung*. In *Pragmatism* he claimed that "the trail of the human serpent is over everything" (P, 37), and we might keep this phrase in mind as a slogan to lend form to a final summary.

This, then, (with apologies for the jargon I have italicized) is James's radical empiricism in a nutshell. It is a form of *nominalism*, but only in terms of explaining the causal origin of concepts. In terms of semantics, concepts are to be seen *pragmatically*: they mean what they do.

Eventually, our ideas are verified by sense experience. *Phenomenalism* is the extension of James's pragmatism, in contradistinction to Pierce, who saw pragmatism expending its maxim in terms of concepts alone. James saw a penumbra of concepts, which considerably extend our cosmic view, and our cognitive powers thereby, as surrounding an experiential core of sensations. This core contains a continuous specious present, an eternal 'now', if you like. This idea is expressed throughout his writings, but is most clearly delineated in his psychological theory of 'sciousness' and the origin of the self.

Logic and mathematics, which serve vitally useful roles in thought, have a psychological basis, though an obscure one. Contrary to classical empiricism, the body of *a prioi* truths are not solely derived from our sensory experience, but from our acting upon that experience in ways dictated by the structure of the mind. This is a form of *psychologism*, but it differs from John Stuart Mill's in that we neither discover deductive laws by experience (compiling inductive evidence for them) nor do we enjoy subjective control over our basic modes of thought. James was not clear enough to tell us what parts of our logic come from ontogeny, which from phylogeny, and which (if any) from childhood education such as language acquisition.

Holism, and the notions of continuity and conterminousness, glue our world together. Experience hangs together in a way Hume—to name one ancestor—did not always clearly affirm. His characterization of the connections wrought by thought as mere habit and custom does not do justice to the efficacious role played by these mental functions in rendering our experience in a veridical (useful) fashion. James, like Berkeley, saw acquaintance or intimate knowledge as grounding his metaphysical system, rendering it more or less immune to scepticism. This also assists his pragmatism insofar as ideas are thought to lead us to their objects. An idea works if it really does get us to our intended goal, and this requires that the world be set up in such a way that our experience contains such smooth paths. The basic continuity of our experience

means we don't need any special powers to arrive at our goals. While logic involves swift (habitual) operations joining terms without sensory intermediaries, our more usual form of thinking doesn't leap; it crawls, or feels its way along.

James's picture, *pace* Richard Gale and other modern critics, is a well-functioning mixture of forward looking and retrospective theses. Pragmatism helps us understand our concepts as they help us plan our way in the world, while the nominalistic thesis explains how such concepts came to be (including abstractions, which are best viewed as increasingly radical re-extensions of familiar (sensory) terms. The metaphorical aspects of conceptual locutions exhibit one aspect of this: *e.g.*, 'I *see* what you mean'; 'I was *inspired* to write thusly'; 'This *reduces* a family of problems to a single principle', *et cetera*.)

This account, in reductively explaining logic and abstracta (and arguably, the external world, in certain construals) in the way it does, runs roughshod over some of the more dearly held values of most philosophers. (So do James's further claims about *indeterminism* and his *pluralism*.) However, its major impetus was a desire to subsume all aspects of human existence under some form of natural science, or natural history. Thus, the major conflict with received views about the *a priori*, universals, unperceived entities, *etc*., is with points of view that demand demarcation of these topics outside the purview of *naturalism*, treating these things as in some sense outside the natural world. James of course had no bone to pick with the majority of commonsensical interpretations of these terms, and certainly would not have considered himself as either an idealist or a subjectivist. His bone was with transcendent entities, or those who left no clear link from the ideal to the real (human-lived) world. James's philosophy was weighted towards *immanentism*. I would argue that this is the most important 'ism' when it comes to unravelling his philosophical remarks.

His naturalism, however, does depart from the norm in his insistence on the reality of individual human freedom, and this may be seen as an explanation of why his naturalism results in a metaphysical view that is not strictly identical with physicalism. James saw 'the physical' as a constructed realm or category derived from *pure experience*, a pseudo-category sufficiently nebulous for James to retain his belief in an indeterminate universe that left room for free will. Thus while James's naturalism led him to reduce some favoured philosophical concepts to roughly biological terms, his phemomenalistic empiricism, along with his pragmatism and his psychological nominalism[108] left him with a view that yielded neither determinism nor materialism, thus making his philosophy appear eccentric and opportunistic—or simply unclear—to many contemporary readers. This kind of perspective would not have been alien to Wittgenstein, though to argue this one must first understand how James's thoughts found employment in Wittgenstein's philosophical *essais*.

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[108] *N.B.*, 'psychological nominalism' is a phrase employed by Wilfred Sellars, though in a different sense than I have used it here.

Chapter Three – "a real human being"

Drury: "I find Lotze very heavy going, very dull."

Wittgenstein: "Probably a man who shouldn't have been allowed to write philosophy. A book you should read is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience;* that was a book that helped me a lot at one time."

Drury: "Oh yes, I have read that. I always enjoy reading anything of William James. He is such a human person."

Wittgenstein: "That is what makes him a good philosopher; he was a real human being."[1]

Introduction: Wittgenstein's mention, criticism and use of James

Philosophical Investigations is no longer read as a collection of aphorisms with no overriding structure or design.[2] Despite Wittgenstein's self-deprecating claims to have provided only an album of sketches after sixteen years of labour, most contemporary scholars take pains to discern Wittgenstein's particular path of thinking, the most industrious effort being Peter Hacker's four volumes (volumes one and two co-authored with G. P. Baker) devoted to the first part of *Investigations*. Though Wittgenstein's manuscript was not sufficiently polished to warrant publication in his lifetime, the *Investigations* does show a complex structure, intricate and overlapping trains of thought, and does offer some insight into the problems treated within.

A complete exegesis of the text of the *Investigations* is not appropriate here. Indeed, I propose to gloss over the first major section of the book, the description and criticism of the so-called Augustinian picture of language (or 'proto-picture', to be precise), in order to discuss more salient passages occurring later on. There is a good reason for this, aside from the familiarity of philosophers with notions like 'language games' and 'family resemblance'. Though the first part of the book dominates most readers' attention, the Augustinian picture is what Wittgenstein is trying to combat; it is not where his mature ideas are expressed. The Augustinian picture of language is the backdrop for his critical remarks; it is the common philosophical picture (common, that is, to realists, idealists, skeptics, solipsists, sense-data theorists) which Wittgenstein needs to clearly depict in order to bring its influence clearly into view. After he establishes this background, he begins a complicated discussion of rules and rule-following that marks the beginning of his reconstruction of the problems of philosophy. This section occupies a curious place in his

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[1] Notes by Drury of a conversation in 1930, in Rush Rhees, ed., *Recollections of Wittgenstein* (Blackwell: 1981), p. 121.

[2] The temptation in part derives from seeing *Investigations* as a *volte face* from the systematic presentation of the Tractatus. The assumption is that the later work must not only express ideas that are contrary to the

manuscript as it developed in the 1930s. It was his original intention to develop the discussion on rules into a discussion of philosophy of mathematics. He gradually changed this plan to move the train of thought into philosophical psychology.[3] Little remains of the mathematical path, a curious remark in the final paragraph of part two serving almost as an old landmark. The remarks on rules and rule-following remain something of a hub, leading the reader in the direction of philosophy of mind, or into philosophy of mathematics (via the rejected manuscript material, which is extensive) as one pleases. (See Appendix, Figure 3-2, p. 191.) For this reason, many commentators on these sections refer to *Remarks of the Foundations of Mathematics* and *Philosophical Grammar* for clarification and amplification of points made briefly in *Philosophical Investigations*. Regarding this 'rule-following' terrain, Baker and Hacker liken this part of the text to a treacherous mountain pass, which is as far as many readers care to go, after the relative ease of the approach, *viz.*, the remarks describing the Augustinian picture. What lies beyond the pass is a long and difficult downward slope traversing terrain unfamiliar to some in the logico-linguistic tradition. Immediately following the discussion of rules are the remarks on the possibility of a private language, the notion of the privacy of pain and sensations, and the nature of thinking and related mental functions. Wittgenstein's mentions of James occur on this leeward slope, and this is remarkable, primarily for the absence of other major influences in Wittgenstein's thought in this location in the text.

The Four Explicit References

Once one turns an eye towards the text of *Investigations*, four passages explicitly referring to James show themselves. Three deal with ideas James expounded, and one passage cites testimony reported by James, although that testimony is used to make a philosophical point with which Wittgenstein takes issue. In each case the material gathered serves as a launching point for Wittgenstein's own remarks. He is critical in the manner one would be of an answer that narrowly misses its target. This is consistent with what others have reported as Wittgenstein's attitude of respect for James, and of his love of the *Varieties of Religious Experience* and the *Principles*.

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earlier work, but that the style of the later must be as (deliberately) unsystematic as the former was rigidly schematized.

[3] This greatly obscures, among other things, the ubiquity of James within the Wittgenstein manuscripts. As early manuscripts such as *Philosophical Remarks* (1930) and *Philosophical Grammar* (1932) were among the earliest and most frequently read manuscripts posthumously published, readers get a picture of a much more 'mathematical' Wittgenstein than his overall body of work would indicate. Furthermore, many, if not most, of the early commentators on Wittgenstein, including former students, had logical interests that helped shift the critical spotlight away from psychological questions. G. H. von Wright is of the opinion that Wittgenstein never abandoned his plans to integrate the material we now know as Part Two of *Investigations* into Part One, and construct a new half devoted almost exclusively to philosophy of mathematics. Given that Wittgenstein seems to have done hardly any serious work on the subject after 1943, and that even his psychological writings peter out around 1949, the *Investigations* looks more and more like an orphaned manuscript, similar to James's *The Many and the One*. See von Wright's *Wittgenstein*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982). James's manuscript is preserved in *Manuscript Essays*.

As for the *Varieties*, Russell Goodman has argued that this text may well have given Wittgenstein the idea for family resemblances.[4] In *Varieties*, James took a pluralist approach to his subject matter, and refused to reduce 'religion' by means of a definition, or a description of a prototypical manner of life, or of thought. Moreover, in the chapter dealing with philosophy, James argues explicitly for this view, and against the 'intellectualism' he felt obscured philosophical investigation into religious questions. In a word, James advanced a therapeutic argument against orthodox philosophy, showing how to stop asking questions that distort their subject matter.[5] This is also a pronounced theme in his *Pragmatism*.

Regarding *Varieties*, I would suggest it is not relevant here: the connections are too ephemeral, and Goodman's article has said all that needs to be said. Indeed, there is no trace of the book's influence (apart from the above-mentioned) in *Investigations*. Most extant comments on the relation between James and Wittgenstein linger over *Varieties*, due to a note from Wittgenstein to Russell dating from 1912. The point seems to be explaining Wittgenstein's religious attitude, *vis-à-vis* the 'mystical' revisions of Wittgenstein's theories of logic and language in the years after 1914. Goodman also discusses Wittgenstein and James on 'existential' matters, again, not something pertinent to our immediate concerns.

There is some mention of pragmatism (not the book) in the *Nachlaß*, and in *On Certainty*. (RPP 1, §266; OC §422) The evidence suggests Wittgenstein's understanding of the position was sketchy, and he considered it a term ill-suited to description of his own views. Again, Goodman has attempted to resuscitate James on this matter, but I will not delve into that problem here.[6] In my defence, it might be noted that James considered pragmatism as something of an entrance-point to his wider views, and this territory has been sufficiently well traveled to allow the reader to spot familiar pragmatic flora as they enter our view.

The real 'meat' for our inquiry is to be found in the four explicit references to James found in the *Investigations* as it has been handed down to us. Three are in part one, the final mention occurs in the material now known as *Investigations*, part two. Each touches upon a different philosophical issue, and each raises unique interpretive challenges. In general we may say that Wittgenstein distorts or misinterprets James's text in order to make philosophical points with which James would have agreed, or

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[4] Goodman, 1994 and forthcoming; *Cf.* Baker & Hacker, *Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations* 1:325, and Hallet, *Companion to Wittgenstein's Investigations*, p. 40, who also note the similarity.

[5] James's discussion of the 'sick soul' and the 'twice born' healthy soul (who comes to see the world rightly) are early subjects in the *Varieties*, and serve as perhaps the best known examples of James's therapeutic vocabulary. This would have been quite influential during Wittgenstein's years in Norway and his military service, where he struggled with, as he put to David Pinset, "the feeling of being *de trop* in the world."

[6] *Cf.* Matthew Fairbanks, "Wittgenstein and James" *New Scholasticism* 40(3) [1966]; S. K. Wertz, "On Wittgenstein and James" *New Scholasticism* 46(4) [1972]; Jaime Nubiola "W. James y Wittgenstein: ¿Por Qué Wittgenstein No Se Consideró Pragmatista?" *Anuario Filosófico*, 1995 (28), 411-423.

with which James *ought* to have agreed, to remain faithful to his *Weltanschauung*. I will discuss these quotations in the order they occur in the text. Following this I will consider what the textual 'leftovers' of interest, such as implicit reference to James. Throughout I will be developing Wittgenstein's position, laying groundwork for the concluding chapter where I argue he develops a form of radical empiricism.

Reference One: The Ballard Case in *Principles*

The first mention of James in *Investigations* occurs at section 342, and regards James' citation of the testimony of Melville Ballard. Ballard was a deaf-mute working as an instructor at the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Washington, D.C., and had given a memoir of his prelinguistic years that had been published in the *Princeton Review* by Samuel Porter in 1881. In "The Stream of Thought", James mentions Ballard and reproduces a portion of his testimony. He does this to make a point about the adaptation of systems of thought to systems of sensory input (so the 'world' of a blind man will be more tactile than a world with a visual aspect), and to address a controversy among philosophers about whether thought is at all possible without language use.[7] James affirms that it is indeed possible, and Ballard's testimony provides his support. In it, Ballard talks of his childhood ability to "convey my thoughts and feelings to my parents and brothers by natural signs or pantomime" (Ballard, in James at 257), and to their communication being limited to mundane affairs in the life of the household. He relates trips taken with his father, the purpose of which was to broaden Ballard's experience. Here Ballard claims that on these trips he first posed to himself the question 'How came the world into being?' and he then describes a series of philosophical and cosmological questions that he pondered in solitude.

James takes this to be clear evidence that wordless thought is possible, and that, while most of us think exclusively in words, this is simply the dominant mode of thinking. Furthermore, he notes the existing debate among philosophers on this issue, and in citing the literature of the day, James is critical of opponents who settled the question of thought's reliance on speech by stretching the definition of speech unreasonably. If speech includes all use of symbols and the occurrence of mental images, James thinks the investigation has been skewed. In addition, James calls attention to less commonly noted phenomena that he thinks play a role in understanding.[8]

Wittgenstein's use of the Ballard case

The critical remarks about thought without language are situated in a broader discussion of the nature of thought. Following Hacker, we may view sections 316-362 as comprising a 'chapter' on the nature of the

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[7] In our current parlance, this phenomena of the cortex shaping itself in accord with the manner of sensory inputs it receives is known as 'topographic reorganization', or (more simply) 'mapping.'

concept 'thought'. Indeed, this chapter forms an interesting companion to James's chapter on the stream of thought, and James's ideas seem to be in sight throughout the discussion. Major themes in this section are the possibility of thought without language (this builds on the so-called 'private language' arguments, which precede this section), the speed of thought and the connection of this feeling of a tempo with inward speech, and the role of symbols and mental images in thinking. Considering the fact that §§316-62 and "The Stream of Thought" have these topics in common, the possibility exists that James is targeted because he is the easiest or best target for Wittgenstein's attack. (These are not the same thing.) However, I will argue that while James is vulnerable to some of Wittgenstein's remarks, the fact that the two thinkers are at cross-purposes on matters pertaining to psychology vindicates James to some degree.

The received opinion among Wittgenstein scholars is that James was in error. He believed, it is argued, that he thought the mind of a deaf-mute was full of meanings, to which words had yet to be attached. A typical opinion is Peter Hacker's: "William James cited the Ballard Case as empirical proof that one can think even though one has not mastered a natural language and cannot speak one. Wittgenstein challenged the intelligibility of the story." (Hacker 3:327)

Regarding James's position, his alleged proof that language and thought are separate is countered by other comments in the *Principles* that thought has a connection with signs or images, (933), and as we shall see, by the claim that Ballard did have a rudimentary language. The real claim James was making seems to be related to the emergence of certain types of thoughts (religious, scientific, aesthetic) traditionally assumed to arise only as a result of specialized training or socialization. Wittgenstein's challenge to the intelligibility of the report is valid, however, we will find him and James disagreeing on the meaning of 'thinking', which will give this encounter the character of an antimony. As Hacker notes, Wittgenstein is concerned with a picture of thought and language as dual processes, normally linked with one another. This so-called 'dual-process' conception of linguistic meaning is the topic of investigation in the passages surrounding the Ballard case.[9] Thus Hacker describes Wittgenstein's aim, namely "to explode the idea that behind the intelligent use of any sentence lies a mental process of thinking the thought which that sentence expresses." (Hacker 3:316) Cases of thinking without speaking and speaking without thought are considered (§318*ff.*) in order to subject this conception to strain. By the time Wittgenstein gets to Ballard, he has a special case that demolishes any notion of there being thought without language. This demolition can occur by pointing out the confusion over retrospectively applying criteria within language to earlier,

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[8] James specifically mentions "the wordless summary glimpses which we have of systems of relation and direction." (259n25). *Cf.* Wittgenstein's discussions of "grasping in a flash" in *Investigations*, §139, §191, §197, §§318-319. See also his remarks in *Culture and Value*, p 63.

[9] Hacker situates the notion of a 'dual process' philosophically in 3:318-326. Wittgenstein's remarks at §332, §339 are most revealing, as is *Blue Book* p. 3: "We are tempted to think that the action of language consists of two parts; an inorganic part, the handling of signs, and an organic part, which we may call understanding these signs, meaning them, interpreting them, thinking." (Cited by Hacker, 3:316.)

pre-linguistic experiences. Wittgenstein shows Ballard his memory is grammatically unclear. This appears to be the *coup de grâce* to the notion that thought is an inner process constituting the 'soul' of language.[10]

While Wittgenstein is critical, according to Hacker (3:335-338), of James' idea that what is 'inside' the head is mute (that is, Ballard's mind is full of thoughts he cannot put into words), it is worth recalling James's distinction between percepts and concepts: experience *is* mute in an important way, and our conceptualizations are incomplete expressions of what we see. They are also transformations of that primitive experience. As David Stern notes, Wittgenstein arrived at a similar point of view as early as 1929[11]. (On James's account of the omissions of language, see above, pages 139-40.) Wittgenstein's idea of thinking is so mathematical, so wrapped up with signs that he too is guilty of relying on a misleading metaphor—a picture of thought as calculation. James's notion of 'thinking' is much broader, and his attention to the 'mechanism' is not necessarily misguided, because he wants to understand its surroundings. He thinks they will bear fruit for psychology. Wittgenstein thinks it a conceptual confusion—like looking at the last move in chess to see what 'mating' is (§317) or looking at a block of cheese to see what happens when its price goes up.[12] In short, Wittgenstein thinks like an engineer, on paper, in formulae.[13] James thinks like a writer, in words, (reading, writing) many of which are spoken silently prior to committing them to paper. (James himself discusses this aspect of his own thinking in "The Function of Cognition" (*Meaning of Truth*, p. 31.))

Thought Without Language and the Background of Gestures

There are problems associated with the interpretation taking Wittgenstein to have thought James completely wrong on this matter of thinking and language. Closer scrutiny to James's use of the story is enlightening. In an essay published in *Philosophical Review* in 1892, entitled "Thought Before Language: A Deaf-Mute's Recollections"[14], James gave a more detailed account of the phenomenon he was citing, and he included the testimony of a second deaf-mute. Furthermore, he clarifies his own understanding of the significance of this testimony.

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[10] The metaphor is Hacker's. His context implies a connection with Plato's *Theatetus*, which is mentioned twice in *Investigations*. See his volume 3, pp. 313-334.
[11] Stern dates this realization from the manuscripts that make up *Philosophical Remarks*, where Wittgenstein talks of the difficulty of language's capturing the flux of experience. See *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, chapters 5 and 6.
[12] This remark occurs in the manuscript volume MS 179 (*ca.* 1944-5). Hacker cites the latter in connection with §693 where the analogy reappears, with butter in place of cheese.
[13] This suggestion may shed some light on Wittgenstein's fascination with recognizing a solution 'in a flash.' There is one anecdote recorded by the villagers of Trattenbach that illustrates how Wittgenstein thought. He is reputed to have looked at a broken steam engine, wordlessly, for some time, and then issued instructions to workmen (specifying places they were to strike the machine with hammers) that resulted in its repair. This remarkable story can be found in Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, p. 197.
[14] Page numbers cited below refer to the reprinted version in James, *Essays in Psychology*, pp. 278-291.

In this article, James again relates a deaf-mute's memoir of his mental life prior to the acquisition of a robust, public language. The author is Theophilus d'Estrella, a Swiss-Mexican deaf-mute raised in San Francisco, who like Ballard, grew up without the advantage of normal language-learning. In his account, d'Estrella was fascinated with matters unrelated to his basic subsistence. He reports his having studied the moon, wondering whether it was alive, and formed beliefs about the Earth being flat and the sun being a ball of fire and so on. His reported speculations give evidence for an animistic worldview, and he reports to James (in a letter included in the essay) his dreams and earliest memories. Most interesting for James is d'Estrella's report of childhood instances of stealing, and the latter's eventual negative reaction to the activity. James takes this to be convincing evidence of a native conscience, as the child came to abhor his actions not because of teaching or prudential reasoning, but due to an almost visceral aesthetic reaction to the situation. "It will be observed," writes James in summary, "that his cosmological and ethical reflections were the outbirth of his solitary thought; and although he tried to communicate the cosmology to others, it is evident, [due to the limited nature of his sign-language] that the communion must have been very incomplete." (*Essays in Psychology*, 289). This is consistent with James's views in "The Consciousness of Self" (*Principles*, chapter X), as he thought metaphysical and religious thinking was a very solitary activity, the expression of which was simply a crude afterthought.

The most important feature of both accounts is that the subjects in both cases were not entirely without language: gestures and a primitive sign-language were employed in both cases, prior to the acquisition of a mature language. However, prior to the possession of 'robust' linguistic skills, both subjects report having reasoned and speculated about moral and cosmological matters, neither of which seems available via the simpler language of gestures. Thus, while neither case looks like a purely non-linguistic situation (tempting one to disallow the testimony), the reports are of events thought to require a full language as their medium. Indeed, to the skeptical reader, the case James relates in "Thought Before Language" is even more plausible than the Ballard case. The 'thoughts' mentioned by d'Estrella seem far less abstract than those mentioned by Ballard. In d'Estrella's relating his being afraid of the moon, his reported thoughts are of being fascinated by it, and wondering whether it was a living being. (In comparison, Ballard's thoughts were more abstract: he reportedly asked himself 'How did the world come into being?') These attitudes towards the moon pose an interesting dilemma for the Wittgensteinian criticism: they appear to be more akin to emotional responses than to the application of concepts by means of a discrete technique, suggesting that concepts or thinking (*i.e.*, the manipulation of concepts) might not be relevant here at all. If so, Wittgenstein's criticism is blunted: emotional responses and curiosity can appear without language's clothing, as we attribute these attitudes to non-human animals and to infants. However, the crucial point of the Ballard case that seemed to interest Wittgenstein remains: the question of how to apply our normal criteria of meaningfulness in a non-linguistic scenario is unanswered. Consider Wittgenstein's remarks on the Ballard case. Immediately after citing Ballard's recollection of a prelinguistic question about the origin of the world, Wittgenstein asks the following questions:

> Are you sure—one would like to ask—that this is the correct translation of your wordless thought into words? And why does this question—which otherwise seems not to exist—raise its head here? Do I want to say that the writer's memory deceives him?—I don't even know if I should say *that*. These recollections are a queer memory phenomenon,—and I do not know what conclusions one can draw from them about the past of the man who recounts them. (§342)

The issue for Wittgenstein revolves around the application of our concepts of memories and their verifications (what counts as testimony), and the sense of 'translating wordless thoughts into words'. The peculiarities of this case (these recollections' being a 'queer memory phenomenon') are used to illustrate a point about verifying 'inner' states or processes, and the mistaken picture of thought as something existing separately from a language.[15] If we assume thought is something distinct from language, *i.e.*, that there is a thing called a thought that exists apart from, or behind, our employment of words, we tend to sanction the idea of translating a thought into words. Yet this poses a problem regarding the criteria for correct translation: what is to count as a correct translation of a thought into words? In Wittgenstein's series of questions, it is clear that his concern is semantic rather than epistemic, and insofar as James never took this problem seriously, his use of Ballard's testimony leads him to draw conclusions about the nature of thought in the face of unclarity.

This lack of clarity would be bad enough, did it not tend to strengthen our existing prejudices. The impression one takes from d'Estrella's testimony is that pre-linguistic thought fits naturally with the animism we find in many pre-literate, pre-scientific cultures. Wittgenstein would question this assumption, as he did in his "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*", where Wittgenstein repeatedly takes Frazer to task for naively importing modern concepts into his report on primitive cultures. Regarding this manuscript, Rush Rhees has pointed out Wittgenstein's close attention to the nature of gestures, which emerged from his reading of Frazer.[16] The suggestion is that gestures seem to form a kind of background, deeply rooted in the history of a culture, from which much of the nuance of the meaning of our utterances derives. Gestures occupy an important place not only in early language-learning, but in mature expressions, particularly in cases where small shifts in meaning can have important consequences. Presumably deaf-mutes such as Ballard (though not those that are also blind) would share our gesture language to a degree.[17] In the d'Estrella case, not only James, but d'Estrella himself, in giving his recollections, seems to assume

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[15] There is also a parallel with mathematics here: one might see the use of the Ballard case to settle a philosophical/psychological question as 'queer' in the same way one would regard the seizing of an unusual mathematical situation (*e.g.*, a set of infinites) to settle the question of the possibility of one infinite set being 'larger than another'.

[16] "Wittgenstein on Language and Ritual" in Brian McGuinness, ed., *Wittgenstein and his Times*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

[17] Perhaps it is *we* who share it with them: see Oliver Sacks's deeply reflective monograph, *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf*, (Berkeley: University California Press, 1989.) The point about blind deaf-mutes is to underscore the learned character of most gestures. Persons with such cognitive separation from other humans would still have a large repetoire of 'innate' physiognomic reactions, such as wincing or grinning.

that his primitive 'thoughts' were simply bad scientific reasoning. He talks of attempting to 'prove' whether the moon was alive or not, and of making similar 'experiments' on similar objects, such as lights. What is unclear here is what he means by 'to prove' and 'experiment' in the absence of a learnt tradition of proof and experimentation. The criteria that would allow one to describe a move as contributing to a proof or not doing so are here lacking.[18]

Interestingly, James's correspondent, Mr. W. Wilkinson (superintendent of the institution where d'Estrella teaches drawing) notes that "It very often occurs that deaf-mutes are not able to distinguish between the concepts obtained before and after education."[19] But Wilkinson attributes this to a subject's faulty memory, which d'Estrella's case avoids, as the latter has an excellent memory. Thus, for Wilkinson, a personal ability settles the dilemma. He sees this as an epistemological matter; for Wittgenstein, it will be a matter of a lack of criteria. Wilkinson, like James, is blind to the semantic problem Wittgenstein poses.

For James, it is neither a question of an unclarity about the retrospective application of the criteria identifying thought, nor did he have epistemological qualms about the veracity of the report. Unlike Wittgenstein, he takes the report to be semantically unproblematic, and he takes the reporter at his word that he did indeed have discrete thoughts prior to learning our language. James is curious about the role of mental imagery in thinking, and the conclusions he draws from the cases of Ballard and d'Estrella illustrate this concern. Of the Ballard case, James wrote:

> It makes no difference in what sort of mind-stuff, in what quality of imagery, his thinking goes on. The only images *intrinsically* important are the halting-places, the substantive conclusions, provisional or final, of the thought. Throughout all the rest of the stream, the feelings of relation are everything, and the terms related almost naught. These feelings of relation, these psychic overtones, halos, suffusions, or fringes about the terms, may be the same in very different systems of imagery. (*Principles*, 260-1)

James is thinking of Ballard's activities in terms of primary consciousness, the association of mental images and his reactions to them, including his comparison of them with his sensory awareness. As noted in chapters one and two, functional relations play the pivital role in leading an organism to its goal, and if such relations are understood on biologically (rather than semantically), James can perhaps avoid the full force of Wittgenstein's criticism. Ballard's fumbling gestures to his peers might indicate an unfulfilled function, in the absence of language, and thus the problematic memory report might not be the sole focus of this inquiry. This possibility aside, the philosophical point drawn from James's comments on Ballard is one Wittgenstein would view with much sympathy: thought does not have as its medium any one 'stuff', whether signs or words in a particular natural language. (This is something characteristic of many of the

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[18] As mistaken as we would be to assume that persons without language possess clear concepts of proof and experimentation, we overlook a great deal if we deny them skills commonly associated with reasoning. Lawrence Weiskrantz's article in John Preston, (ed.), *Thought and Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), provides a useful summary of the evidence for non-linguistic reasoning.

James quotes in *Investigations*: closer scrutiny will reveal James and Wittgenstein to be in general agreement.) Wittgenstein in fact stresses the heterogeneous nature of thinking as an activity (it may be done on paper, through speaking out loud, speaking inwardly, staring at an object, or at nothing at all.) However, thinking does not begin and end with what we might call deliberating or pondering: Wittgenstein characterizes thinking as a specialized (and learned) technique.[20] Questions must be posed[21] (hence one must learn how to pose questions!), and thought terminates in the taking of a course of action. This action may include explaining a solution to others, or giving orders. (In the case of d'Estrella, one would want to know just how he behaved toward the moon after his having wondered about whether it was a living being. Unfortunately, this is not contained in the memoir.)

Wittgenstein's preoccupations with the distinction between correct and muddled use of signs (using signs with a sense, versus using them nonsensically)—and his pragmatic concern with acting subsequent to having thought—shift the definition of 'thinking' in a direction that undercuts James's conclusions. (Though it should be noted that these two lines of criticism show an affinity with pragmatism.) For James, thinking is only partially distinguishable from feeling[22], and from the subjective features of primary consciousness. It is no wonder he would not necessarily link these phenomena to language: even his view of concepts allowed for a non-linguistic species of concepts to find employment in a mind such as the young Ballard's. Concepts are reflex categorizations (that is, they find their psychological beginnings as responses which organize our reactions to stimuli, *e.g.*, percieved motion is something many animals react to as 'alive' and then further categorize as food, foe, rival, mate, *etc.*) This is an evolutionary view of concepts developed, among others, by Edelman in augmenting James's theory of mind. It is not a view that requires language, on the contrary, linguistic concepts are explained as an outgrowth of non-linguistic concepts. But this understanding of 'concept' is a psychologist's stipulation, it is a specialized use that is remote from our ordinary usage.[23] It is to Wittgenstein's advantage (from the point of view of empiricism) that his account pays closer attention to the role 'thinking' plays in our natural languages. His worry is that

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[19] James, *Essays in Psychology*, 279n2

[20] This is one of two analyses of 'thought' we find in Wittgenstein here. The second—thoughtful speech—is discussed below.

[21] Sacks, *op. cit.*, points out that this aspect of language acquisition is particularly difficult for deaf-mutes to adopt if language learning has been delayed beyond early adolescence. The games surrounding interrogative language are—due to the extreme social isolation of many deaf children—far more difficult to acquire than descriptive language.

[22] See above, p. 22.

[23] On James's use of 'concept', see above, p. 113*ff*. Edelman is clear about his stipulative use of 'concept'. His use also mirrors James's 'sense of sameness'. On Edelman's view, "[a]n animal capable of having concepts identifies a thing or an action and on the basis of that identification controls its behavior in a more or less general way." Concepts thus require perception, memory and modifiable behaviour, but not language. (His account develops James's percept/concept distinction in neurological and evolutionary detail. See *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*, chapter ten.)

unclarities inherent in the Ballard case lead philosophers to view thought as a pseudo-language[24], or alternatively as a 'gaseous medium' (§109). This atmosphere or stream, existing in people's heads, behind their spoken words and public behaviour, is something that science has yet to isolate, and we await scientific advances that will permit us to learn the empirical features of this medium. *Prima facie*, the Ballard case provides evidence of the existence of this medium, which in normal adults is obscured by language.

James's radical empiricism was designed to shift our thinking about the mind away from ideas such as these, and one could argue that his language in 1890-92 of 'mental stuff' in which one thinks is vitiated by his later metaphysics of pure experience. (That is, we move from 'mental stuff' to some kind of 'neutral stuff'.) However, I do not think James ever fully extricated himself from this manner of thinking. In his mature writings he wrestled with the unavoidable subjectivity of experiences (particularly perception), and he did not have available to him the linguistic solution employed by Wittgenstein. For, in Wittgenstein's analysis, first-person reports are simply grammatically different from third-person assertions: there is not a grammatical rule allowing for expressions of doubt[25], hence we do not (strictly speaking) have *knowledge* of our pains or qualia, because we cannot be mistaken. Wittgenstein's view could give James's radical empiricism its intended result: we would have a view of the world where

1) Skeptical doubts about other minds do not arise.
2) Awareness of first-person states is not private or hidden (the distinctness is grammatical in origin.)
3) Judgements of reality are based on the possibility of agreement and putting claims to work.
4) The flow of the stream of thought would be explained in part by comparison with the flow of language, and,
5) The heterogeneity of thought would be explained by showing how thought sometimes occurred in words, other times wordlessly, when we simply act (retrospectively saying, perhaps, 'I suddenly thought of the right thing to do').

James's comments on the Ballard case are not terribly fruitful when it comes to untangling his own views on the relation of thought and language. He gives the impression that a wordless stream of thought exists

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[24] Thought is a 'pseudo' language because it is presumed to be essentially perspicuous (hence unlike languages, which admit of the possibility of ambiguity) and because thought, while presumed to underwrite language, i.e., giving the latter meaning, itself requires no medium behind it in order to be meaningful. (See Hacker, vol. 3, "Thinking: The Soul of Language"; *cf.* Hans-Johann Glock, "Philosophy, Thought and Language" in Preston, *op. cit.*)

[25] Wittgenstein attempted to illustrate this in *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 2: '"To seem to believe", a verb. The first person present indicative is meaningless, because I know my intention. But [to create such a form] would be *a* development of "he believes".' (p. 9.) This manuscript material was reworked somewhat, and appears in *Investigations*, Part 2, section x, p. 192. See John Canfield's discussion in *Wittgenstein: Language and World* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981.)

inside Ballard's head, awaiting translation. And certainly, were one to read only this section of *Principles*, this would be the end of the story. Fortunately, he makes other remarks that clarify things. In a later chapter in *Principles*, James once again mentions thought *vis-à-vis* language. In "The Perception of Reality" he writes:

> The opinion so stoutly professed by many, that language is essential to thought, seems to have this much of truth in it, that all our inward images tend invincibly to attach themselves to something sensible, so as to gain in corporeity and life. Words serve this purpose, gestures serve it, stones, straws, chalk-marks, anything will do. As soon as any one of these things stands for the idea, the latter seems to be more real. (933)

This appears to be what David Pears calls the 'mental talisman' theory of meaning[26], where one believes the mind contains mental samples or talismans that are constantly available for comparison with our utterances. However, James's qualification ('tend') may mitigate the criticism here. Although James does also talk of 'inward images' (*e.g.*, "The Stream of Thought"), his stressing the role of transitive thoughts as opposed to images excuses him from the view that the image itself serves as the key to grasping a meaning. As Pears points out, if language really did have an inner image from which it derived its meaningfulness, thought would provide a problem case. If it was analogous to language thought would itself require a sample or object to be meaningful, and we would thus have to introspectively detect whether or not our thoughts were referring correctly. Yet this does not occur. Thought is not verified internally; it is not interpreted in the way a statement or picture is. The popular proto-picture of thought as a 'super language' that gives speech meaning is what is being criticized by Wittgenstein. The picture presents a dilemma for those who would investigate beyond its surface: thought either regresses infinitely (each thought deriving its meaning from another mental object to which it refers), or it loses its pictorial quality altogether, for if it cannot be wrongly applied, then we are dealing with a commonplace object, not a sign.[27] Wittgenstein aims to correct our view of the relation of language and thought by his analogy in the section preceding his mention of the Ballard case: "Speech with and without thought is to be compared with the playing of a piece of music with and without thought." (§341) We are not tempted to postulate something inner or hidden in the latter case (thoughtful musical performance), and yet the distinction between thoughtful and thoughtless performance is preserved. It loses its metaphysical airs, and become more 'domestic' or everyday, but here we have a difference we can clearly identify, for it is not difficult to point to instances of speech or music that lack the nuances that are the marks of 'thoughtfulness'. As we shall see in chapter four, Wittgenstein treats thoughtfulness as an aspect of speech that may emerge once the technique of

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[26] David Pears, *The False Prison: A Study in the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, volume 2, chapter 9.

[27] Hacker's discussion of this is perspicuous: see his remarks at 3:318: thinking is either referring to a transcendent abstract entity, or we think (mean) continuously to underwrite our utterings (here Hacker has James in mind.) Hacker also mentions idea of translating imagistic inner language into words (one version of the 'language of thought'); the purpose of thinking on this view is to cause the hearer to have similar experiences as the utterer. Given Wittgenstein's (and James's) admission that thinking can take place in a variety of media, this picture of language as a vehicle for reproducing experiences must be rejected.

speaking has been successfully mastered. There are two points about the view of the thoughtful quality of speech being a perceived aspect of the utterance that ought to be noted. The first is that this account describes thoughtfulness or meaningfulness as an emergent phenomenon, much in the same way that James portrayed subjective 'thoughts' and objective 'things' as emergent from a field of pure experience. The second point concerns the 'background' of gestures and physiognomy which give expressive shape to our language. The gestures we use and recognize, (and the characteistic expressions or physiognomies that serve as outward criteria of many mental states) are an integral, learned part of our use of language, but they also serve, in some cases, as the 'vehicles' or manifestations of the so-called 'content' that is conveyed in our instances of thoughtfully saying something. I will argue that viewing this pure experience story in terms of emerging expressiveness in one's language use is a more natural way of viewing the metaphysical distinction radical empiricism tries to describe.

The simple view of Wittgenstein's mention of Ballard as part of a recommendation for a *volte face* (leading us, perhaps to reject the notion of thought altogether and embrace eliminative behaviourism) overlooks the surrounding comments on thinking. Wittgenstein is pointing out that we have a heteronomous collection of examples of thinking, and thinking cannot be reduced to manipulating or attending to images, signs, speaking inwardly, calculating or solving problems.[28] It encompasses all of these. The temptation is to find an essence or paradigm example of thinking, and it is this that leads to questions like those raised by Ballard's testimony. There must be, the reasoning goes, some medium or vehicle of thought that 'breathes life' into otherwise dead signs. (Wittgenstein would point to shared gestural and physiognomic 'lexicons' or responses as the aspects of physical acts which embody this 'soul' we detect in mental language[29].) James skirted this temptation, but only barely, for his comments, if stripped of the usual academic's hedging, do seem categorical when it comes to linking thought with a train of mental imagery. But we must take into our account the fact that James is also using 'thought' in a different way that Wittgenstein, and the equivocal nature of the term in this comparison of James and Wittgenstein further obscures their positions.

Given James's frequent appeal to the stream of thought, or experience, it would seem that James is indeed guilty of positing a medium beneath language. That medium is experience, and Wittgenstein explicitly undermines the cogency of positing experience as language's bedding at §509 and sections vi and xi of Part Two. However, when we consider Wittgenstein's attitude towards thought, meaning and language (that the words, as used, are the vehicle of meaning and therefore thought), James is not so far off the mark. Cash

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[28] *A fortiori*, they cannot be eliminated from psychology, as behaviourism would imply.
[29] I do not mean to exclude non-psychological matters from this account. Wittgenstein also talked of the characteristic gestures surrounding religious and aesthetic utterances, especially in his lectures in the early thirties. See *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966).

out 'experience' in terms of 'the experience of using a language to navigate one's environment' and we seem to have some convergence on this issue.[30]

Outside the essential mode, *i.e.*, of the view that the case isolates the essence of thought by providing a scenario where language is taken out of the foreground, the Ballard case takes on a different character. It has the character of a bastard case, unlike our familiar examples of thinking, and here we lack the criteria (or rules) to assimilate this story into our concept 'thinking'. We cannot assign a sense to the picture that Ballard relates, and this is due to our confusion over what would count as 'thinking about the nature of the universe' outside of a linguistic community. If we allow that the gestures Ballard used count as linguistic behaviour, then he is not absolutely outside our world. But problems remain. He is like a member of a primitive culture (primitive in the manner of Wittgenstein's builders) in the respect that his linguistic practices do not involve cosmology: he has no gestures to express the things we would express when playing the 'cosmology game'. He does however have emotions and reactions at this point, like most conscious beings, and our confusion is compounded when he learns our language and attempts to retrospect, telling us what the analogue of our cosmology-game was in his earlier state. Our game involves emotional responses (if wonder, fear, or boredom can be so called); whose manifestations match those of Ballard's earlier life. He is like a person who has lived much of his life in a culture that had only basic arithmetic, of whom we have questions as to what his understanding of the concept 'infinity' was prior to our meeting him. It is unclear what features of a private, unexpressed experience would count as using or pointing to 'infinity'. (Imagine trying to teach such a concept: we might point to the horizon and describe the act of walking toward the setting sun. If we wanted, we could perhaps teach someone the difference between 'indefinite' ("we don't know how many steps there will be, but there will be an end") and 'infinite' ("this is a kind a walking where there is not a last step."))

Though James is taken as the butt of these criticisms, he comes off rather well after circumspection. His own comments throughout *Principles* suggest he was skeptical regarding the expressibility of personal experience (his error was to hope for future expressibility). And, his remarks concerning imagistic thinking do have frequent qualifications that may excuse him from the essentialist fallacy attributed to him by many Wittgenstein commentators (*e.g.*, G. Hallett, P. Hacker). Indeed in his early essay "Brute and Human Intellect", he took pains to distinguish reasoning from entertaining a series of images, and subdivided this latter concept, contrasting volitional types with reverie.[31]

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[30] In criticizing James's 'experience-metaphysics', it is tempting to forget how much he stressed action throughout his writings. The picture of a pipe-smoking gentleman, sitting in his armchair 'having experiences' is far from accurate. James's emphasis on Ballard's engagement with his world was a major part of the account, as was Ballard's struggle to express himself to others.

[31] James, *Essays in Psychology*, p. 2.

It is tempting to regard this instance of disagreement between James and Wittgenstein as a simple case of the latter pointing out the absurdities in the view of the former, but contemporary scholarship shows that the relation of thought to language is subject to a variety of interpretations. James's position, in fact, is far more warmly received in psychology than Wittgenstein's.[32] Hans-Johann Glock, expounding Wittgenstein's point, makes clear the upshot of mentioning the Ballard case:

> The first essential link between thought and language, then, is that we identify thoughts by identifying their linguistic expressions. The second essential link is that the *capacity* for thought requires the capacity to manipulate symbols, not because unexpressed thoughts must be *in* a language, but because the *expression* of thoughts must be. The reason is that ascribing thoughts makes sense only in cases where we have criteria for identifying thoughts....Something must count as thinking that *p* rather than that *q*, otherwise ascriptions of thoughts are vacuous. This means that thoughts, although they need not actually be expressed, must be *capable* of being expressed. And only a very restricted range of thoughts can be expressed in non-linguistic behaviour. To use Wittgenstein's famous example, a dog can think that its master is at the door, but not that its master will return the day after tomorrow. The reason is that its behavioural repertoire is much too restricted to display such a thought.[33]

While psychological investigations into non-verbal problem solving and learning show a great deal of support for the notion that thought does occur without language, we should not lose sight of Wittgenstein's original, philosophical, point. That point was that recollecting specific verbally expressed thoughts, *i.e.*, thoughts with something approximating a propositional content, is subject to a host of confusions in a case like Ballard's. This is not addressed by research like Weiskrantz's (see note 32, below), on the contrary, his remarks about the articulation of memories seem to put him in agreement with Wittgenstein. His work points out that activities of non-linguistic subjects meet many of our criteria for applying the word 'thought.' In fact, such research reveals a great deal about the heteronomy of 'thinking', or at least as the term appears to fit with phenomena observed by psychologists, who for all their training in experimental methods, are not likely to have any extremely odd speech habits.

Reference Two: Intercephalic movements (§413)

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[32] Regarding scholarly opinion today, the following are noteworthy: *Thought and Language: Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 42* (1997) (ed. John Preston); Stephen Michael Kosslyn, *Image and Brain: The Resolution of the Imagery Debate* by (MIT Press, 1996); Lawrence Weiskrantz, *Thought Without Language*, Oxford UP, 1988. In addition to an extensive and venerable body of evidence on animal and infant reasoning (*e.g.*, Köhler, Piaget) and study of brain-damaged adults (Wieskrantz's work in particular seems reminiscent of James's), the study of the role of images in thought is undergoing a renaissance. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (FMRI) is used to study the activity of regions of the brain during thought, and the consensus emerging is that images can play a role in thought (which, of course, Wittgenstein did not deny, he denied only that images were akin to talismans, enabling us to grasp a meaning: see §448ff.). The inference is based on the activity in areas of the brain dealing with perceptual memory in the absence of stimulation of the relevant sensory organs. See Kosslyn, *ibid.*

[33] Glock, "Philosophy, Thought and Language" in Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 167. The example quoted appears in *Zettel* at p. 174; *cf. Investigations* §650.

Section 413 constitutes the first direct reference to an idea of James's. Here Wittgenstein discusses James's critical comments about introspection and the state of the introspecting psychologist's attention. This is a passage where James is criticizing the idea of consciousness as some kind of inner realm, and it is taken from "The Consciousness of Self" (*Principles*, chapter X, p. 288). Here again, attention to the context of Wittgenstein's use of James is revealing. In section 412, Wittgenstein discusses the notion of an 'unbridgeable gap between consciousness and brain processes', and goes on to remark upon the quest to relate mental and physical (specifically, cerebral) processes. Here we have an interpretive challenge, for Wittgenstein is at cross-purposes with most contemporary philosophers but in possible agreement with James. Yet, as in the Ballard case, Wittgenstein (and those commenting on him) seems to overlook the potential for agreement with James. (This generally lends credence to the notion that the relation between the two is more a matter of convergence than strict influence.) In this section of his work Wittgenstein will attempt to dispel the air of paradox surrounding talk of consciousness, though he will not side with the various eliminative options available at the time. His solution will be the suggestion that traditional dualism is a compelling picture we apply when we reflect upon human behaviour. This picture obscures the logic of our natural languages, as we take from it the notion that the world breaks down rather simply into two types of things, mental and physical, and that knowledge of the former is inferred from the latter. Our normal use of psychological verbs is far subtler than this picture implies, and the relation of these words to the language-games of physical objects is not uniform. (Realization of this 'polymorphism' was instrumental in Wittgenstein's rejection of classical phenomenalism.) Like James, Wittgenstein will point to relations that connect talk of awareness to public objects and events, linking the sense of expressions utilizing psychological verbs to things others can observe and verify. (These outward signs Wittgenstein called 'symptoms' and 'criteria', the relation between which was rather fluid.) Statements that have an air of paradox about them will be neutralized by a pragmatic criticism: showing a lack of a clear sense or application will dispel the illusion.

However, this is far from easy. Mind/body dualism is a simple picture, and one very compelling to apply. Our tendency to construct an oversimplification of the heteronomy of expressions that utilize psychological verbs has a variety of causes. This is typical of a philosophical proto-picture, the reasons the picture is the way it is are not manifest, and the picture itself may be ambiguous. Given that we may be unaware of a proto-picture influencing our thought on the nature of mind, if such a picture is indeed at work, even the most suggestive similes may be interpreted in such a way as to return us to our original perplexity.

In the section preceding this first direct quotation of James, Wittgenstein explores the notion that a gap exists between mind and brain:

> The feeling of an unbridgeable gulf between consciousness and brain-process: how does it come about that this does not come into the considerations of our ordinary life? This idea of a difference in kind is accompanied by slight giddiness,—which occurs when we are performing a piece of logical sleight-of-hand. (The same giddiness attacks

us when we think of certain theorems in set theory.) When does this feeling occur in the present case? It is when I, for example, turn my attention in a particular way on to my own consciousness, and, astonished, say to myself: THIS is supposed to be produced by a process in the brain!—as it were clutching my forehead.—But what can it mean to speak of "turning my attention on to my own consciousness"? This is surely the queerest thing there could be (for these words are after all not used in ordinary life)[34]! It was a particular act of gazing that I called doing this. I stared fixedly in front of me—but *not* at any particular point or object. My eyes were wide open, the brows not contracted (as they mostly are when I am interested in a particular object.) No such interest preceded this gazing. My glance was vacant; or again *like* that of someone admiring the illumination of the sky and drinking in the light.

Now bear in mind that the proposition which I uttered as a paradox (THIS is produced by a brain-process!) has nothing paradoxical about it. I could have said it in the course of an experiment whose purpose was to shew that an effect of light which I see is produced by stimulation of a particular part of the brain.—But I did not utter the sentence in the surroundings in which it would have had an everyday and unparadoxical sense. And my attention was not such as would have accorded with making an experiment. (If it had been, my look would have been intent, not vacant.) (§412)

This passage is noteworthy for its mention of the similarity between philosophy of psychology and philosophy of mathematics. In what has become the concluding remark of the book, Part 2, section xiv, reiterates this point, comparing psychology with set theory for their 'conceptual confusion'. Thus it is conceivable that Wittgenstein meant §412 to stand out from its surroundings, as a hint of the book's overall theme or structure. But a more obvious clue to the passage's meaning can be found in the subsequent remark, where we find James quoted:

> Here we have a case of introspection, not unlike that from which William James got the idea that the 'self' consisted mainly of 'peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat.' And James' introspection shewed, not the meaning of the word "self" (so far as it means something like "person", "human being", "he himself", "I myself"), nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word "self" to himself and tries to analyse its meaning. (And a good deal could be learned from this.) (§413)

The crucial hermeneutic question here is, what did Wittgenstein think was the 'lesson' of James's anecdote? Atypically, Hacker makes a poor attempt to penetrate the meaning of this last, parenthetical sentence. He says of it: "*e.g.* about the phenomenology of philosophical illusion (*cf.* PI §§274-7)." (Hacker 3:532) The possibilities are first, that James is an 'object lesson' in philosophical error, *i.e.*, we learn to avoid 'introspection' as a philosophical tool because it led James astray. A second possibility is that James *reduced* the sense of self to just these intercephalic movements. Our third option is to see James and Wittgenstein in some sort of agreement here. The convergence would be on the *source* of philosophical pictures of the mind as an 'inner citadel.'

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[34] This parenthetical remark was omitted in Anscombe's translation, I have added it in accord with Hacker's translation. See Hacker, 3:531.

The first possibility is untenable, given a fair knowledge of James's philosophy of mind. He manifestly did *not* fall deep into the pit of subjectivism, unaware that he was making up such a realm from purely physical phenomena. Nor did he embrace the 'spiritualism' available in his time. His remarks critical of the postulation of a transcendental ego (*Principles*, pp. 325-352), if anything, tend to give the stream of thought an ephemeral, unreal quality, hence his guarded approval of introspection as a tool, and his many warnings about the 'psychologists fallacy'.[35] Indeed, to argue that James was the victim of such confusion would require James to have ignored his own advice in the passage cited. (Or perhaps he was incapable of heeding it, but cognizant of his failure.) As for the second interpretation, James's further comments about the self (its social and material components) indicate that he did not have a strongly reductive concept thereof. The self was not 'just' intercephalic motions *per se*, these are what we find occupying our sensory attention when we try to 'feel' the self. (See chapter one, above.) The third interpretation, of James as warning us about the 'phenomenology of philosophical illusion' in this case, is most plausible. James did deal with introspection, this cannot (and should not) be denied.[36] However, James was sufficiently aware of the possibilities for misapplication to *not* let himself think such motions were revelatory of inner features of the mind/brain system, *i.e.*, of something approximating a soul or ego in the Cartesian sense.

Wittgenstein's remarks on introspection and its 'evidence' are followed by a series of metaphors worth attending to. They are, I will argue, jointly constitutive of Wittgenstein's attempt to undo the damage of the dualist picture.

§§414-421: an empty loom; a kind of natural history; struts and stability.

James's plight aside, what is the lesson *Wittgenstein* thought we should learn in concluding his remark §413 thusly? What can be learned from James's discovery of our typical state of attention while introspecting? The answer comes in sections 414-29, and the ideas expressed here will resonate throughout *Investigations*. (Hacker breaks this 'chapter' on consciousness into two subsections, 412-421 and 422-429; I will follow his analysis and divide my discussion accordingly.) The first point Wittgenstein makes is James's, *viz.*, that in a certain way our picture of the mental is based on those motions in the head and throat. We form a picture of the 'mental world' and thought-processes that is based upon intercephalic movements. Wittgenstein makes a series of comparisons in order to make this point.

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[35] Richard Gale has recently argued that introspection was for James first among equals among the psychologist's tools. *Pace* Gale, given the picture of the stream of thought as transitory, as 'blooming' and 'buzzing' with detail, it may seem surprising to think of James as an unqualified supporter of introspection. It is fairly clear that James sees it as a sort of *Rückblick*. See *Principles*, ch. 8, and Gale, *op. cit.*, ch. 8.

[36] Nor did Wittgenstein deny the reality of introspection, though this is seldom noted. He tended to view the term through Köhler's use, which was disparaging, and accordingly tried to subsume the notion under two related concerns: the sense-conditions of first-person avowals, and seeing objects 'under an interpretation'. Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume 1, contains the pertinent

In §414 Wittgenstein likens the previous confusion involved in the act of introspecting to sitting at a loom and "going through the motions of weaving." This remark is meant to convey the curious lack of determinate reference when one claims to be looking inward. How is this looking to be understood? As a direction of the eyes? Of the attention? Even this alternative seems unclear, and the psychologist's comfort with the locution should not seduce us into thinking the problem is solved by expertise.[37] James's remark is elucidatory: he suggests we mistake our bodily comportment for evidence of a non-bodily—i.e., mental—process.[38] This may be taken as evidence for, or a cause of, a dualist proto-picture: in an abnormal circumstance (sitting alone and wondering about the nature of one's mind), common, typically unnoticed bodily sensations engage our attention and become the 'mark' of the mental.

In the next remark Wittgenstein claims this discovery is far from sort of thing that would attract the scientist[39]: "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings…" This is a fortuitous echoing of a comment by James, who, on the wider topic of what it means to know the workings associated with knowing anything suggested the present conditions of knowledge "have still earlier conditions which, in a general way, biology, psychology and biography can trace. This whole chain of natural causal conditions produces a resultant state of things in which new relations, not simply causal, can now be found, or into which they can now be introduced".[40] This is a point too infrequently made by James, as it significantly clarifies his enterprise. The complexity of knowledge as a phenomenon demands this wide-ranging kind of inquiry: personal idiosyncrasy, as well as the idiosyncrasies of history and our biological make-up will deeply stain the fabric of our knowledge as it manifests itself over time.[41]

Returning to *Investigations* §415, the reference to natural history may give the impression that Wittgenstein viewed his contributions as scientific; however, this is not the case. The difference between Wittgenstein's revelations and the discovery of a new phenomenon is made clear in the remainder of the remark: "we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes." What is undoubted is not the claim that dualism is

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essais. See also Hacker's remarks at 3:242, *cf.* p. 323. It is important to notice that both Wittgenstein and James reduce the explanatory and justificatory *roles* of introspection, while not denying its existence.

[37] On the damage done by the notion of developing expertise in introspection, see Köhler, *Gestalt Psychology*, chapter two. Köhler's remarks, as previously noted, were quite influential on Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's relation to the former is akin to the one I am suggesting between him and James, though on a much narrower range of issues.

[38] See *Principles*, 835, for a fuller account by James of the temptation to err on this matter.

[39] This claim is true only if one has in mind a particular picture of scientific activity. In this context, Oliver Sacks provides some insight: "a scientist of language is a special sort of creature who needs to be as interested in human life, in human community and culture, as he is in the biological determinants of language." (*Seeing Voices*, pp. 140-1.) This holds true of the psychologist as well.

[40] "Professor Pratt on Truth", in *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 175.

[41] For a recent argument along these lines, see James Blachowicz, *Of Two Minds: The Nature of Inquiry*, (Albany, NY: SUNY press, 1998.)

obviously false, but that the act of 'looking inwardly' is typified by a certain gaze, state of attention and bodily comportment more generally. This same sort of excusing oneself from the immediate physical environment takes place in other situations: watching someone using a cellular phone while walking is sufficient reminder of this.

Following §415 is a series of remarks situating the term 'consciousness' in a less philosophical setting. This is a typical deployment of Wittgenstein's later notion of the sense of a proposition or utterance. Section 421 is the climax of this series of similes, and indeed of Wittgenstein's point in this 'chapter'. It is worth quoting in full:

> It seems paradoxical to us that we should make such a medley, mixing physical states and states of consciousness up together in a *single* report: "He suffered great torments and tossed about restlessly". It is quite usual; so why do we find it paradoxical? Because we want to say that the sentence deals with both tangibles and intangibles at once.—But does it worry you if I say: "These three struts give the building stability"? Are three and stability tangible?—Look at the sentence as an instrument, and as its sense as its employment.

This simile of the building's stability can be compared to other similes, *e.g.*, the musical phrase of §527*ff*, and the gesture of encouragement at §433. It also connects with Wittgenstein's comments on aspect seeing in Part 2 (*passim*). If we take this simile seriously, we have a possible picture of the mental as an aspect of a physical system, akin to the stability imputed to a building. This would dispel the picture of mentality as inner or hidden, but is it not a simple materialism or reductive physicalism? Would this not sanction interpreting Wittgenstein as a behaviourist? Certainly Wittgenstein was aware that he might be misinterpreted on this point (he remarked upon it at §307, and further remarks in §§423ff. confirm his belief that thinking goes on, that private images are entertained) but we shall see that the very idea of ontological reduction was anathema to him.

Thus Wittgenstein compares the confusion regarding mental processes with the use of pictures in a physical context, specifically, in the use of the idea that there are two carbon rings in a benzene molecule[42]: "What am I believing in when I believe that men have souls? What am I believing in, when I believe that this substance contains two carbon rings? In both cases there is a picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey." (422) Hacker suggests that Wittgenstein put a scientific picture alongside the one about souls, in order to suggest the latter is not 'occult' in any way, "rather it is to cleave to a certain form of representation of human experience, human relations, and human values." (3:540) I think Hacker is right to suggest Wittgenstein did not mention these pictures as examples of faulty theories, but as models we have used, and might innocuously use henceforth, provided the application (or sense) of the picture is understood.

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[42] Wittgenstein mentions benzene by name at p. 184. Here he does not, though the hexagonal structure of benzene does contain two concentric rings, due to the double bonds between carbon atoms.

Similarly, in §424 Wittgenstein talks of our picture "of blindness as a darkness in the soul or in the head of the blind man" and he is explicit that he does not dispute the correctness of this picture. Application is the issue troubling him, which will eventually culminate in our cloudy application of the picture of the mind as a process in the brain.

Section 426 is the culmination of this line of thought, and one of the more remarkable passages in the *Investigations*. There Wittgenstein joins several key *leitmotifs* in an illustration of how philosophical thinking leads us to a pseudo-scientific search for the reality behind the manifestations of human life. The specific target is the picture of the consciousness (or the mind) as 'inside the head', something akin to—or possibly identical with—neural processes. Thus he writes:

> A picture is conjured up which seems to fix the sense *unambiguously*. The actual use, compared with that suggested by the picture, seems like something muddled. Here again we get the same thing as in set theory: the form of expression we use seems to have been designed for a god, who knows what we cannot know; he sees the whole of each of those infinite series and he sees into human consciousness. For us, of course, these forms of expression are like pontificals which we may put on, but cannot do much with, since we lack the effective power that would give these vestments meaning and purpose.
>
> In the actual use of expressions we make detours, we go by side-roads. We see the straight highway before us, but of course we cannot use it, because it is permanently closed.

These remarks about an imagined route for a god to investigate consciousness,[43] not to mention pontificals we may put on but can't use, and closed highways are pivotal to Wittgenstein's *Investigations*, both in terms of the document and his broader efforts. James expresses similar thoughts. Thus we see in *The Meaning of Truth*, "Essential truth, the truth of the intellectualists, the truth with no one thinking it, is like the coat that fits tho no one has ever tried it on, like the music that no ear has listened to. It is less real, not more real, than the verified article" (p. 205)[44] For James the issue was primarily fidelity to empiricism and practicality—there is no need to postulate an ideal route when the one in use stands awaiting our exploration. It is important to note that Wittgenstein's affinity with James here involves a commitment to some form of phenomenalism. The rejection of the pseudo-scientific postulation of a reality behind the manifestations of human life is characteristic of the phenomenalist's rejection of a hidden substrate 'explaining' the phenomenal world. Given Wittgenstein's overall commitment to intersubjectivity, and (more to the present point) his rejecting this move precisely when it is directed to the mental world (rather than objects and their phenomenal properties), we should place Wittgenstein with James in the agnostic phenomenalism camp.

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[43] *Investigations*, p. 217, contains a seeming denial of this application, for there Wittgenstein claims "If God had looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of." At p. 226 he makes a similar comment in a mathematical context. *Cf.* §352.

To paint in broad strokes, the basic point of §426 seems to be that philosophers rip words out of their natural contexts, do something else with them, and then claim to have knowledge of some new thing in the world. Is this it? Do we "people a space with impressions" in order to *create* a world of consciousness to explore via psychology?[45] We shall see that James is vulnerable to this line of criticism. However, regarding the broader point about the postulation of an 'ideal highway' standing beside the goat-path of our everyday psychological discourse, we may well ask whether James is a *bona fide* target of such an accusation.[46]

Neither Wittgenstein, nor cautious exegetes like Hacker have read James very closely on this issue of the relation of the mental and the physical. For example, in supplementing his exegesis of §413, Hacker provides a brief quote from *Principles*:

> "Mental and physical events, are on all hands, admitted to present the strongest contrast in the entire field of being. The chasm which yawns between them is less easily bridged over by the mind than any interval we know. Why, then, not call it an absolute chasm, and say not only that the two worlds are different, but that they are independent?" (Quoted by Hacker, 3:531, in original at 138.)

The source of this quote is James's chapter on "The Automaton-Theory", which might cause concern if one notes that Wittgenstein appears to have concentrated on other sections of the text. However, this kind of statement is fairly common in James.[47] The problem here is that James was *criticizing* dualism and his ironic tone has been missed. He is engaged in a project similar to Wittgenstein's: criticizing the abuse of a picture of the mind. James was battling against the epiphenomenal theory of consciousness, which gains support from dualism (if minds are one type of thing and brains another, there cannot be causal relations between them, particularly from the former to the latter.) James's own view was more subtle: he postulated connections, going so far as to characterize neural and psychic processes as merging into one another, or perhaps as sharing some unclear kind of kinship. Thus he thought there was a relation waiting to be explained, but to accuse him of embracing the Cartesian picture of the mind is quite wide of the mark.

Clarification of Wittgenstein's attitude in *Zettel*

The sections 602*ff.* in *Zettel* bear directly on the material in *Investigations* §§412-29. This is evident from their subject matter: here Wittgenstein again discusses the relation of mental and physical (mind and brain),

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[44] *Cf. Pragmatism*, p. 126*ff.*
[45] This is a rhetorical paraphrase of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* 1, §720: "The concept of the world of consciousness. We people a space with impressions." This remark shows how agnostic phenomenalism is directed at both the 'problem' of the external world and that of the 'inner' world.
[46] Such a conception, however, may well underlie contemporary discussions of 'folk psychology'.
[47] Recall that this was a major theme in "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?"; James also made this point elsewhere in *Principles* (177*ff.*, 212*ff*). As for the 'on all hands' admission, recall that James, in writing his survey of psychology, frequently suppressed his own, more radical, metaphysical views.

and also blindness, colour images, and the tendency to correlate thinking with what goes on in the head. Here, in this typescript material, Wittgenstein is somewhat more explicit in his criticism of the logical parallelism between mind and brain. (I use 'logical' to indicate the *a priori* nature of this connection: it is not presumably an empirical discovery that mental events must be grounded in physical ones. See *Investigations*, §158.)

In *Zettel*, section 602, Wittgenstein makes an etymological remark connecting these thoughts with his frequent criticism of the picture of the mental as some kind of gaseous medium. The pointing to the originary concrete or physical meaning of 'influence', to 'give forth a fluid' (Wittgenstein's rendering), is meant as a reminder of the minor, seldom noticed tendencies of words to pull our thinking in one direction or another. This is part of Wittgenstein's preoccupation with 'grammar': the vocabulary of psychology itself exerts a minor 'gravitational pull' upon philosophical thinking.[48] We regularly employ metaphors deriving from commonplace work with fluid media in order to characterize thought, and, as James thought our conceptual habits led to a kind of 'figured consciousness' of perceived phenomena, Wittgenstein in this passage calls attention to how a picture of gravity affects our interpretation of our bodily sensations:

> Compare this case: Someone is to say what he feels when a weight is resting on his flat hand. Now I can imagine a split here: On the one hand he tells himself that what he feels is a pressure against the surface of his hand and a tension in the muscles of his arm; on the other hand he wants to say: "But that isn't all! I surely feel a pull, a drive downwards on the part of the weight."—Does he then have a sensation of such a 'drive'? Yes: when he thinks of the 'drive'. With the word 'drive' there goes here a particular picture, a gesture, a tone of voice; and in this you can see the experience of the drive.
>
> (Think also of this: Some people say Such-and-such a person 'gives forth a fluid'—This is the source of the word "*influence*".)

This passage links two ideas that permeate *Investigations* §§412-429: there is the notion that we subject the same physical sensations to multiple interpretations (here it is the 'feelings in the hand and arm' versus 'the feelings *plus* the heaviness (or 'drive downwards' of the object), where a picture of an object's pulling towards the earth colours our interpretation of bodily sensations. There is also the parenthetical remark about the pull of words, where the literal meaning of a psychological locution shapes our thinking about the mind. When we think of an influential book, we might think of it as exercising causal powers over those who read it; to be subject to someone else's influence it conceived as somehow similar to the pushing of waves, or water moving through a channel. These do not have to be our exact conceptions of things; the point Wittgenstein is making is that we ought to be aware of the potential for locutions to affect our models

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[48] Perhaps a better way of characterizing the phenomenon is by comparing it to rivulets formed in sand after water pours over it. Small channels are formed, seemingly randomly, which guide the course of the next rainfall. This is an analogy Edward de Bono uses in the *The Mechanism of Mind* to characterize memory. In chapter one, I discussed ways of looking at memory systems that—in one direction at least—terminated in such a picture. The picture of a family of memory-types was meant to illustrate that more subtle shift in grammar that comes from taking a picture and applying it in several different contexts. See p. 79, above.

of psychological phenomena. Even a locution as apparently fruitful as 'the stream of thought' is capable of unwelcome distortion of the facts of our mental lives.

The subsequent sections take this warning as sufficient, and Wittgenstein is more explicit about what pictures are to be rejected. Thus in section 605 we encounter a startling claim. "One of the most dangerous of ideas for a philosopher is, oddly enough, that we think with our heads or in our heads." As he notes in the remark that follows, "[t]he idea of thinking as a process in the head, in a completely enclosed space, gives him something occult." (606; *cf. Investigations* §426-7) Wittgenstein want to upset our causal picture of human behaviour[49], he wants to disabuse us of any notion of there being entities standing behind the manifestations of human thought and the penumbra of language surrounding them, which give those thoughts meaning. In effect, he wants to put the *performance* of thinking front and center. This is exemplified in his remarks on memory a few sections later. The constant emphasis on the present moment as the locus or center of Wittgenstein's investigations is often cited as a feature of his phenomenalist writings of the early thirties, and the assumption is that he abandoned this effort when he abandoned his search for a primary or 'phenomenological' language to express immediate experience.[50] But as Joachim Schulte has shown[51], this is a persistent feature of Wittgenstein's later writings, such as these remarks in *Zettel*. This means that the phenomenalist streak detected by so many in the 'middle' period of Wittgenstein's work may have survived in the work of the *Investigations* period, albeit in a different, more subtle form.

Whereas James was cautiously optimistic about the eventual mapping of neural/psychic interactions, Wittgenstein was not a believer in psychophysical laws. This is clearest in *Zettel* §§608-611, where Wittgenstein claims "No supposition seems to me more natural than that there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or with thinking; so that it would be impossible to read off thought-processes from brain-processes." (§608) Stronger denials of psychophysical connections occur in the following sections, giving the impression that Wittgenstein saw dualism as far more a case of incoherence than the ontological exaggeration James took it to be. The denial of causal relations had a motive expressed in these typescript remarks. "The prejudice in favour of psychophysical parallelism," Wittgenstein claims, "is a

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[49] *N.B. ibid.*, §610: "I was this man years ago: now I have seen him again, I recognize him, I remember his name. And why does there have to be a cause of this remembering in my nervous system? Why must something or other, whatever it may be, be stored up there *in any form*? Why *must* a trace have been left behind? Why should there not be a psychological regularity to which *no* physiological regularity corresponds? If this upsets our concept of causality then it is high time it was upset." Here we see another affinity with James—a criticism of the philosophical reliance on causal notions. James would have partial sympathy for Wittgenstein on this matter. For, despite all his confidence in future discoveries, he was emphatic that even in modern science, the idea of causation remained "an altar to an unknown god" (*Principles*, 1264.)

[50] Stern, *op. cit.*, and Pears, *The False Prison*, make this assumption.

[51] Schulte's exploration of Wittgenstein's work on memory is quite valuable. See *Experience and Expression*, chapter 7.

fruit of primitive interpretations of our concepts. For if one allows a causality between psychological phenomena which is not mediated physiologically, one thinks one is professing belief in a gaseous mental entity." (*ibid.*, §611; *cf.* RPP 1, §906) The belief in a 'gaseous mental entity' resulting from this prejudice was a significant matter for Wittgenstein. The later remarks of *Investigations* are frequently directed at undermining a protopicture both of meaning and mental states as ethereal, somehow standing alongside the physical world but not wholly within it.[52]

Remarks like these, denying causal relations between brain-processes and what we normally take to be consequences of them may have prompted John W. Cook to foist an untenable worldview on Wittgenstein, where the latter was allegedly forced to expect at any moment the eruption of a 'metaphysical nightmare' into experience, such as a void opening up under one's feet or conversations erupting from inanimate objects. Indeed, in *ibid.*, §608, Wittgenstein suggests thinking proceeds "out of chaos," rather than as something emergent from patterns of neurons firing. Cook's view imputes a Humean form of empiricism to Wittgenstein (including classical phenomenalism *á la* Ayer, Russell and Moore) such that Wittgenstein cannot admit to any knowledge of the outside world, or manoeuvre with confidence around his immediate environment.[53] This *reductio* is easily circumvented by pointing to Wittgenstein's 'practical holism' as well as by exploring the differences between the varieties of phenomenalism available to Wittgenstein.[54] Rather than see Wittgenstein as taking leave of his senses, or embracing scepticism (which flies in the face of many of his later remarks), we might see an agnostic phenomenalist (or more broadly, an 'immanentist') strategy at work, where strange ontological differences are revealed to be differences in grammar. Thus we find, as early as the *Blue Book*, such a Jamesian strategy at work:

> At first sight if may appear (but why it should can only become clear later) that here we have two kinds of worlds, worlds built of different materials; a mental world and a physical world. The mental world in fact is liable to be imagined as gaseous, or rather, aethereal. But let me remind you here of the queer role which the gaseous and the aethereal play in philosophy,—when we perceive that a substantive is not used as what in general we should call the name of an object, and when therefore we can't help saying to ourselves that it is the name of an aetheral object.[55] I mean, we already know the idea of

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[52] The direct connection between semantics and philosophy of mind can be found in several places, perhaps most conveniently at *Last Writings on Philosophy of Psychology*, 1, §979. *Cf.* the preceding remarks, as well as §504, which again deconstructs the prejudice towards interaction.

[53] See Cook's discussion of 'metaphysical nightmares' in *Wittgenstein's Metaphysics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) chapter 12. Cook has recently reiterated his interpretation in *Wittgenstein, Empiricism and Language* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.) Cook does aid the current thesis by showing how—despite familiar claims to the contrary—Wittgenstein's work does display a *Weltanschauung* profitably designated a 'metaphysical position', even though he is well-known for an attempted transcendence of (dogmatic) metaphysical stances.

[54] The term 'practical holism' derives from David G. Stern's treatment. See *his Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1995) p. 120. Certainly *Investigations* §481*ff* belie Cook's thesis.

[55] Wittgenstein's animus against nominalism stems from this mistake. "Nominalists make the mistake of interpreting all words as *names*, and so of not really describing their use, but only, so to speak, giving a paper draft on such a description." *Investigations*, §383. Though he does not identify his own view with

> 'aethereal objects' as a subterfuge, when we are embarrassed about the grammar of certain words, and when all we know is that they are not used as names for material objects. This is a hint as to how the problem of the two materials, *mind* and *matter*, is going to dissolve.[56]

Wittgenstein's dissolution of the dualist picture will take place via the exploration of the variety of ways of using language. We talk of struts having stability, or coming in sets of three, without thereby referring to another world than the manifest one. This strategy will turn out to be ubiquitous in Wittgenstein's more mature work. It is akin to James's pointing to the functional relations experiences develop over time: when we find new relations obtaining between our early perceptions and our subsequent cognitions or intentions, we are tempted to see ourselves 'entering a new world' when a more accurate analysis would be to point to a new end being sought, or new connections being made. The divergence of the grammars of two different projects (*e.g.*, talking of the material composition of a building, versus talking about its structural integrity) can further aid this feeling of referring to something wholly other than what is before one's eyes. This view of the origin of a sense of discovering a dualism is markedly therapeutic: it dissolves the dualism by subjecting such ontological 'changes of location' to a pragmatic analysis.

As noted earlier, James was at times vulnerable to the influence of this primitive dualist picture of two processes constantly conjoined with one another: in many moments of the *Principles* he construed the mental stream as supervening upon the stream of neural activity, and if he did not hope to identify one with the other, he certainly did expect we would come to understand each through its concomitant. Wittgenstein insisted on a much, much broader separation of these two domains. The result was his account of thinking avoided some absurdities and unnecessary postulations. It also cuts his work off rather radically from the mainstream of philosophy of mind. Joachim Schulte has argued that it is the failure to grasp the nature and extent of Wittgenstein's project that has led to attributions of him in recent years as a behaviourist, although one may easily find other positions foisted upon him. (He cites Ian Hacking's interesting claim that Wittgenstein was a Cartesian dualist.) Schulte attributes this to the "zeal for classification" among philosophers, to whom "Wittgenstein's attitude presents a kind of scandal."[57] Certainly there is a measure of distance between Wittgenstein's position and current 'live options' in philosophy of mind. However, one might find in this very situation a plausible link with an older, forgotten view like James's radical empiricism.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to complete the argument that Wittgenstein held a form of radical empiricism. However, it is worth noting here how a rejection of psychophysical parallelism would lead one in that direction. Denying this relation (between the neural and the psychic) not only removes a

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the term, Wittgenstein's functional, genetic account of language is strongly nominalistic. This remark may indicate a reason for his not using the term.

[56] *The Blue and the Brown Books*, ed. Rush Rhees, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 47. For further developments on this emerging neutrality, see below, p. 183.

significant temptation to posit a physicalist ontology as the basis of 'subjective experience', but it leaves us with something like two geometrical planes intersecting in the form of a human being's life: there is an 'axis' of thoughts we might investigate and a physical axis of neurophysiology as well. The two coincide in a given person, but the vastly different contexts of investigation and discourse need have no more in common than a cross-section of a head has with a smiling face.

Two Moves Towards Neutral Monism: elimination of the self modifies phenomenalism; inward speech and our conception of thought.

To return our attention to *Investigations*, the material leading up to the mention of James shows Wittgenstein toying with a phenomenalistic language and considering the ramifications of taking sensations or private images to be ontologically fundamental. He had explored the possibility of a 'primary language' of phenomena soon after his return to philosophical work, but by the time his recorded conversations with Friedrich Waismann, he had claimed this project was not to his liking.[58] Traces of this early form of phenomenalism survive in *Philosophical Remarks*, which was composed during this time, and may have given impetus to the interpretation of the later Wittgenstein as holding some version of a sense-data theory. It is important to note that, beginning with his earliest remarks on the subject, Wittgenstein was consistent in his viewing objects of perceptions as complexes rather than the perceptual atoms of sense-data commonly assumed at the time.[59] Wittgenstein's views about perceptual experiences had much more in common with James or the Gestalt psychologists than with his philosophical contemporaries.

A glance at the writings of Köhler is fruitful on this matter of Wittgenstein and 'introspection'. In *Gestalt Psychology*, Köhler devotes his first three chapters to a critique of behaviourism and introspectionism, and to explaining how progress can be brought about in the 'young science' of psychology. (This is most likely where Wittgenstein derives the phrase when he offers his critical remarks, which now serve as the end of the *Investigations*.[60] Introspection, as the term was used in the psychology of Köhler's day, referred not to the practice of including first-person reports in psychological experimentation, but to a rather dogmatic attitude towards perception that coloured the psychologist's willingness to count a report as genuine. Unlike James's attitude towards reported experiences (which was at once more pluralistic and more skeptical), Köhler's targets made a sharp distinction between legitimate and illegitimate perceptions,

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[57] Schulte, *Experience and Expression*, p. 159.
[58] See Wittgenstein's remarks from 12.22.29, page 45 of *Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*.
[59] Viewing a perceptual scene as complex left Wittgenstein with a number of perplexities: if a perceptual given was complex, it had to be broken down into component parts by a subsequent act of discrimination or attention. This looks more like an addition, selection, or interpretation of a scene than an analysis of its parts. This issue occupies a significant portion of the so-called "Big Typescript" (TS 213).
[60] *Cf.* M. O'C. Drury, "Science and Psychology", who points out the recurrence of this picture throughout the history of psychology. Apparently Köhler's naïveté was shared by James, Janet, and Hebb, among many others. See Drury, *The Danger of Words*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 25-56.

deeming those produced by trained observers to be the only ones of scientific value. The data from such introspection were alleged to be discriminative perceptions of the 'raw' sensations, free from mental synthesis. This Köhler thought dogmatic and mistaken, and Wittgenstein seems to have agreed. Regarding James, his work is not of this type, though he is not what might be called an innocent target of this kind of criticism. He too aims to find the 'pure' experience, though for him this does not mean some raw sensation or mosaic[61] of sensory atoms. James criticized friends of introspection for their sanguinity regarding this activity, and for the confusion of the point of view of the experimenter with that of a cognitive moment in the stream of thought. Furthermore, he tended to buttress his own introspective data with behaviouristic experiments and tests. Thus, while James did not eschew introspection as a tool (as Watson, *e.g.*, was later to do), neither did he embrace a snobbish form of it as the sole method of investigating perception.[62]

The elimination of the notion that 'I' is a name[63], and the self is an entity, an owner of experience that comes along as a necessary part of awareness is a move that not only mirrors James's attempts, but it alters Wittgenstein's characterization of phenomenalism in a similar way. These ideas are familiar to readers of the *Tractatus*, where Wittgenstein follows Schopenhauer in postulating a 'metaphysical subject' outside the world, from which states of affairs are cognized. (See *Tractatus* 5.6*ff*.) Even in his early work, Wittgenstein wrestled with the notion that 'I' somehow failed to function as 'normal language', in stark contrast to proper names, common names, and indexical terms.

Wittgenstein's attitude towards the self did not change significantly from the *Tractatus* period, though his approach to the question of what the 'self' is was modified. In that work, and in the *Notebooks* from the period 1914-16, we can see Wittgenstein's attempt to sketch an 'ownerless' version of phenomenalism. (This is perhaps overshadowed by a more prominent continuity in Wittgenstein's work: the Fregean heritage of exploring the meanings of propositions by describing their sense-conditions. This is a major Tractarian legacy found throughout the *Investigations*.)

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[61] James did call his *philosophy* a mosaic, but he did not refer to perception as such. Cf. *Principles*, p. 657, where James makes the famous description of the sensory plenum of infancy as a 'blooming, buzzing confusion'. This is hardly the stuff Köhler's introspectionists would have taken as 'pure' experience.

[62] Consider James's opening remarks from "On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology" (1884): "As is well known, contradictory opinions about the value of introspection prevail. Comte and Maudsley, for example, call it worthless; Ueberweg and Brentano come near calling it infallible. Both opinions are extravagances." (*Essays in Psychology*, 142.) James's position is thus not far from Köhler's.

[63] Both philosophers made claims that are shocking at first glance, though it is not the point of this essay to delve deeply into the matter. Thus we find James asserting in *Principles*, "The consciousness of Self involves a stream of thought, each part of which as 'I' can 1) remember those which went before, and know the things they knew; and 2) emphasize and care paramountly for certain ones among them as '*me*,' and *approporiate to these* the rest.…This me is an empirical aggregate of things objectively known. The *I* which knows them cannot itself be an aggregate." (378-9) Compare *Investigations*, §410: '"I" is not the name of a person, nor "here" of a place, and "this" is not a name. But they are connected with names. Names are explained by means of them. It is also true that it is characteristic of physics not to use these words.'

Looking backward to §398*ff.*

If we look at the prologue to §§412-413, we can view the issue of the nature of the self in the mature light of Wittgenstein's thought. Section 398 begins an examination of the solipsistic claim that one might make regarding one's perceptual scenes. One wants to claim "I have *got* something which my neighbor has not." But Wittgenstein questions both the purpose and the coherence of this utterance:

> I understand you. You want to look about you and say: "At any rate only I have got THIS."—What are these words for? They serve no purpose.—Can one not add: "There is here no question of a 'seeing'—and therefore none of a 'having'—nor of a subject, nor therefore of 'I' either? Might I not ask: In what sense have you *got* what you are talking about and saying that only you have got it? Do you possess it? You do not even *see* it. Must you not really say that no one has got it? And this too is clear: if as a matter of logic you exclude other people's having something, it loses its sense to say that you have got it.

In this paragraph alone—I have quoted the first of three constituting §398 in its entirety—we have a great deal to think about. We might begin with the claim that there 'is no question of seeing', nor of 'having' a perception, *etc.* In the background is a point familiar to Wittgenstein (if not to his readers) that in the visual scene there is no sign or phenomenon identifying its owner, or indicating that it even *has* one. Hacker points to a manuscript remark related to §402 that explicitly links Wittgenstein's thoughts on this matter to his Tractarian claims. (The reference is in volume XII of the manuscript material, p. 235.) Hacker quotes the remark and adds, "The Kantian (Schopenhauerian) observation of the *Tractatus* presented an insight into the bounds of sense as a metaphysical discovery. But the truth is that there is no space *in grammar* for an owner in the visual field, not no space in the visual field." (Hacker, 3:502) This insight is more devastating than the pragmatic criticism that precedes it (though this will figure in subsequent remarks by Wittgenstein.) The temptation here is to think of 'I' as a referring expression in the same fashion as third-person pronouns, or gestures of pointing to something or someone. This is part of the meaning of Wittgenstein's denial that the self *has* its perceptions: if the sense-conditions surrounding the use of 'I' are such that there is no room for misapplication[64] in a case such as this (if we have 'excluded the possibility of other persons having my impressions') the claim that one has one's visual impressions lacks sense.[65]

Peter Hacker's analysis of Wittgenstein's deconstruction of the solipsistic urge considered above is particularly useful.[66] He argues that 'I' functions quite differently than indexical terms accompanied by a pointing (deictic) gesture, *i.e.*, the first-person pronoun functions more like 'now' than 'this.' (3:492) It is improper, he argues, to view 'I' as a kind of 'super-referring' term, which is immune to misapplication.

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[64] *Cf. Investigations*, p. 222: 'It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say "I know what I am thinking." (A whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar.)'

[65] This is one instance of a consistent and unorthodox view of Wittgenstein's: the denial of any firm distinction between semantics and pragmatics. See Baker and Hacker's analysis of this, at 2:56-58.

Given the way we use the term, notably by the fact that we do not search for the person to whom it refers, it is not a kind of arrow we shoot out into the world which always happens to hit its target. If anything, Hacker claims, it is more like drawing the bull's-eye around the arrow after it has landed. But while this analogy highlights the strange move we are tempted to make in conceiving of 'I' as a referential term, it may be more accurate to mention that 'I' is not like a deictic gesture at all: there is no pointing going on. Summarizing a line of thought from the *Blue Book* (p. 67), Hacker writes "Saying 'I …' is more like raising my hand to draw attention to myself than it is like pointing to someone." (3:489) This Wittgenstein calls 'the peculiar grammar of the word "I"' (*ibid.*, p. 66). Pointing to one's body while exclaiming 'I find this boring' is superfluous; moreover, if one fails to make the gesture, the utterance does not thereby become unclear.[67]

Undermining the notion of 'privileged access' is an important result of Wittgenstein's deconstruction of the notion that 'I' refers. As the grammar of 'I' excludes error or doubt in many cases[68], talk of knowing one is in pain, or having a visual room that no one else has, ceases to make sense. Once expressions like 'I have toothache' are considered as avowals or manifestations of bodily phenomena rather than referring expressions (pointing to an 'inner realm'), we remove one of the components of the dualist picture that leads us to suppose there is a thing called 'consciousness' or 'the self' that remains to be isolated by science. But surely this does not mean that everyone's visual experiences are the same! We seem to be in danger of eliminating *perspective* along with the entitative view of 'I'. But in the 'Big Typescript' of 1933, (p. 523)[69] as well as in *Blue Book* (p. 71*ff.*), Wittgenstein likens the self or subject to the origin of a coordinate space, a point from which we point, if this unfortunate homonymy may be forgiven. Pointing activity has as its paradigm something akin to the drawing of vectors: we use the concept 'self' as a locus or origin, from which the pointing or referring gesture gets its direction in space. The problem with statements about one's private, inner sensations thus becomes rather obvious: one must somehow draw a vector to and from the same point, the origin, and the alternative of simultaneously pointing to everything and saying 'this is my space, only what I see is *really* seen' is likewise nonsensical.

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[66] "I and my self" in *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*, Volume 3 of his *Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*.

[67] In the discussion cited, Wittgenstein goes on to talk of how in pointing to the sun one does not thereby simultaneously point to oneself as the origin of the gesture. A more perspicuous contemporary example might be the exclamation of "Boring!" during a lecture: hearing who said this tells us who is bored, and the utterer has no possibility of being in doubt that *he* is the one who is bored by the lecture.

[68] 'I' is peculiar in that it is not uniform grammatically. Wittgenstein discusses (*loc. cit.*) cases of "the use as object" of the first-person pronoun, such as "I have grown six inches." These manifestly do make grammatical space for errors, and accordingly such cases must be distinguished from expressions of pain, opinions, sensations, *etc.* The use of 'I' in attempted descriptions of solipsistic moments resemble the latter.

[69] Hacker notes this occurrence (3:489), which I am unable to verify. *Cf.* Pears, *op. cit.*, chapter 10.

David Pears makes a point about this line of thinking we may note in passing. He suggests that in the early development of the ideas in Wittgenstein's mature thought Wittgenstein adopted a form of 'sliding-peg' solution to the solipsist's dilemma. Since he also argues that this same solution was imported into Wittgenstein's treatment of phenomenalism, this is worth our notice. The first point that needs to be made is Pears' opinion is that Wittgenstein originally (*ca.* 1914-1929) considered the common world one of phenomena: thus Wittgenstein rejected the supposition that we need to establish our contact with the world. This is basically Wittgenstein's lack of concern with the problem of the external world—like James, Wittgenstein took an engaged view of perception. Solipsism, then, is an effort to describe a private world *within* that common phenomenal world. Pears explains: "It struck [Wittgenstein] as incoherent to start by identifying the basic data of perception somewhere within experience—for example, as mental sense-data—and then to draw a line around them and maintain that anything that seemed to lie on the far side of the line must be reduced to things on this side of it."[70] From here the solipsist is manoeuvred into a difficult position, for, unable to point to the ego or self in any part of the phenomenal world, he leaves it unidentified. Thus, "[t]he solipsist tried to use his own ego as a reference-point without first identifying it, and Wittgenstein's response was that in that case it was not a fixed peg, but a sliding-peg. The ego was really being allowed to spread to all centres of consciousness instead of being attached exclusively to a single centre, the solipsist's own." (*ibid.*) Pears goes on to add: "Similarly, if Wittgenstein was a phenomenalist, he was a sliding-peg phenomenalist." (p. 277) This is true at least of Wittgenstein's position prior to *Investigations*. The suggestion Pears makes at the end of that paragraph is that Wittgenstein held a 'categorically neutral ontology' in the *Tractatus*. We may look at the difference between the *Tractatus* view and that of the *Investigations* as a move from an abstract kind of neutrality to a view favouring concreteness and plurality or diversity of form.

There is a confusing drama underwriting this issue of whether, and when, Wittgenstein might have been a phenomenalist. Pears notes that in 1929 Wittgenstein made the first of several renunciations of the plan to formulate a 'primary language' in order to perspicuously depict the common phenomenal world as perceived by individuals. Furthermore, in his Cambridge lectures, *circa* 1932, Wittgenstein actually seems to have toyed with classical phenomenalism (and sense-data), despite the previous announcement, and despite strong evidence of his rejection of this position in the Tractarian period. Pears considers the possibility that Wittgenstein may have moved from sliding-peg to classical phenomenalism before arriving at his mature position in *Investigations*. He interprets the 1929 remarks as a move towards pluralism and a comparative method of linguistic analysis; thus the theory of perception may remain, while the goal of philosophical investigation is changed:

> "[T]he idea that there was a primary or phenomenological language was the leading idea of the *Tractatus*: sentences belonging to the primary language would be perfectly appropriate to the phenomena, whatever the category of the phenomena might be. When

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[70] Pears, *ibid.*, p. 276.

> he abandoned this idea, his whole conception of philosophy changed. He gave up the search for a single analysis of factual language, which would be exactly appropriate to the phenomenal world, the perfect mirror hidden deep within all our descriptions of it. Instead, he investigated the obscurities of factual discourse by observing it in action, and, if he constructed new languages, he offered them not as superior analyses or better ways of saying the same things, but, rather, as instructive objects of comparison. We have here the beginning of another way of using language as the key to thought, the comparative method of language-games." (*Ibid.*, p. 280)

More intriguing still is Pears's conclusion that the 'primary' or 'phenomenological' language Wittgenstein once envisaged was an attempt to report "what is immediately given without adding an interpretation." (*ibid.*, 284) This makes Wittgenstein's early view appear similar to James's attempts to explore 'pure experience'. David Stern goes so far as to analyze Wittgenstein's explorations of the issue by importing a Jamesian vocabulary, talking of Wittgenstein's analysis of the specious present, among other things.[71] The strongest evidence for Wittgenstein's interest in developing phenomenalism is commonly recognized to stem from writings dating from 1929-32, though this is not our primary focus here. This is in all likelihood just prior to the time when Wittgenstein studied James's *Principles*.[72]

One further point about interpreting Wittgenstein's transitional remarks on solipsism should be made. Pears makes the case that there is a 'first private language argument', found in the writings known as *Philosophical Remarks* and continuing up to the *Brown Book*. This argument is that the solipsist simply cannot make the self-reference necessary to get solipsism off the ground. The second argument (*Investigations* §243*ff.*) is the flipside of this, that he cannot refer to his sensations or experiences on his own. The notion of the retreat into a private world involves two issues (blooming forth in the twin problems of other minds and that of the external world), the lack of discriminating self-reference and the lack of discriminating 'private' experiences are problems undercutting these traditional paradoxes. The problems push solipsism into ever stranger territory, where there is a congruence of selves yielding a real world (panpsychism) or where there really isn't a *point of view* for solipsism to get started, for this isn't an aspect of the world to which we can point, or alter.

We may now consider the rest of §398, where Wittgenstein says he understands what the solipsist is trying to say when he says he has 'got something no one else has': regarding the 'thing' one has 'got', Wittgenstein asks:

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[71] *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, chapter five. Despite the vocabulary, there is no mention of James.
[72] It is only in the last few years that this issue has been untangled by the scholarly community. Thus we see Cook [1994] coming under intense criticism for projecting the phenomenalism of 1929/30 both back into the *Tractatus* period and forward to include not only *Investigations* but later writings like *On Certainty*. (See P. Dwyer's "Cooking the Books: John W. Cook on Wittgenstein's Purported Metaphysics" *Journal of Philosophical Research* 1999; 24, 311-343.) Hintikka and Hintikka [1986] characterize the years after 1929 as a move towards physicalism, and Pears [1987] is somewhat unclear on the issue of Wittgenstein's phenomenalism after *Philosophical Grammar*. Stern, *op. cit.*, chapter 5, has done the best job I can find of unravelling Wittgenstein's rapidly-developing ideas during this period.

> But what is the thing you are speaking of? It is true I said that I knew within myself what you meant. But that meant that I knew how one thinks to conceive this object, to see it, to make one's looking and pointing mean it. I know how one stares ahead and looks about one in this case—and the rest. I think we can say: you are talking (if, for example, you are sitting in a room) of the 'visual room.' The 'visual room' is the one that has no owner. I can as little own it as I can walk about it, or look at it, or point to it. Inasmuch as it cannot be any one else's it is not mine either. In other words, it does not belong to me *because* I want to use the same form of expression about it as about the material room in which I sit. The description of the latter need not mention an owner, in fact it need not have any owner. But then the visual room *cannot* have any owner. "For"—one might say—"it has no master, outside or in."
>
> Think of a picture of a landscape, and imaginary landscape with a house in it.—Someone asks "Whose house is that?"—The answer, by the way, might be "It belongs to the farmer who is sitting on the bench in front of it". But then he cannot for example enter his house.

Sections 398 and following are the late fruits of Wittgenstein's earlier wrestling with phenomenalism. His resulting position does *not* include the project of creating a 'primary language' of experience, which would presumably capture experience in all its immediacy and flux. In *Investigations*, Wittgenstein's emerging pluralism has shifted such primary expressions to a specialized role within discourse. Thus he concludes, "The 'visual room' seemed like a discovery, but what its discoverer really found was a new way of speaking, a new comparison; it might even be called a new sensation." (§400) This "new conception", of one's own subjective sensa derived from objects and standing between us and the world gives rise to a familiar epistemological worry. Wittgenstein's diagnosis is straightforward "You have a new conception and interpret it as seeing a new object. You interpret a grammatical movement made by yourself as a quasi-physical phenomenon which you are observing." (§401) This new game is certainly playable, to a point; Wittgenstein is not closing off this possibility. However, he is calling attention to our extracting (or projecting) a new phenomenon on top of a familiar one—in effect 'detaching' an impression from the object, "like a membrane" (§276). This is one of a family of cases appearing throughout the *Investigations*, often with metaphors involving membranes, haloes, atmospheres, or similarly ethereal media. The metaphors are by no means new (they can be traced back at least as far as the Hellenistic period[73]) and they are designed to call attention to the way in which the solipsist's raw material—private sensations—are isolated from a larger context. For those who would see Wittgenstein's renunciation of the goal of a primary language as a move towards realism, we might consider his amplification in *Philosophical Remarks*:

> There is not—as I used to believe—a primary language as opposed to our ordinary language, the "secondary" one. But one could speak of a primary language as opposed to

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[73] Lucretius give a fine characterization: "the existence of what we call 'images' of things, a sort of outer skin perpetually peeled off the surface of objects and flying about this way and that through the air. ... I maintain therefore that replicas or insubstantial shapes of things are thrown of from the surface of objects. These we must denote as an outer skin or film, because each particular floating image wears the aspect and form of the object from whose body it has emanated." (*De Rerum Natura*, Bk. IV p. 131, Penguin Classics edition, trans. Ronald Latham.)

> ours in so far as the former would not permit any way of expressing a preference for certain phenomena over others; it would have to be, so to speak, absolutely *impartial*. (*Philosophical Remarks*, §53.)

As we shall see in chapter four, the adherence to impartiality mentioned here (what some would see as the neutrality of neutral monism) will bring Wittgenstein's thoughts in line with James's. His flirtation with idealistic variants of phenomenalism did not lead him to embrace the opposing view (realism), rather, Wittgenstein sought a *tertium quid*, much as James before him. The major difference will come with Wittgenstein's realization that even word like 'phenomena' and 'experience' must be returned to their ordinary usage. We must treat them as impartially as the rest of language. This will constitute one of the major insights fuelling the criticisms of James we will find elsewhere in *Investigations*, particularly section 610.

Given this substantial background to the topics active in the sections surrounding §§412-13, we may now address the remaining question of interpreting Wittgenstein's use of James. He ended §413 by saying 'a good deal can be learned from this' and let the matter drop. But what is the lesson alluded to? And who gives it, Wittgenstein via James, or James himself?

As for the lesson, simply put, it is that our bodily sensations mislead us into constructing a perplexing picture of the mind as an inner realm, as private, or as the inside of our bodies. We come to believe we think with our heads, and from inward bodily motions and inward speech (neither of which are mysterious in themselves) we conceive of thinking as a private soundtrack and backdrop to our lives, lives which are otherwise mostly public. (Only when we repress our normal expressions, *i.e.*, when attempting to deceive or conceal what we think or feel, do our thoughts begin to look like the sorts of thinks that lack publicity, or are unperceivable.) This tendency is reinforced when we embrace a certain view of language, *viz.*, one that—like Augustine's—conceives all parts of language as names, and thus encourages us to treat 'I' as pointing to a thing or location.

Also implicit in Wittgenstein's exposition is an argument that these kinds of feelings (peripheral bodily sensations) cannot form the substrate of mental life (they are in philosophy, so to speak, put center-stage inappropriately, like Rozenkrantz and Gildenstern in Tom Stoppard's play). One can look back at §321, where Wittgenstein notes parenthetically "there is no ground for assuming that a man feels the facial movements that go with his expression, for example, or the alterations in his breathing that are characteristic of some emotion." These, like our posture, may serve to enlighten others to our mental states or line of thought, but they do not form evidence for *us*, even if we take notice of them soon afterwards. This theme recurs in the later passages in *Investigations*, and will be further clarified by subsequent use of James.

Regarding who is teaching the lesson, there is no indication that Wittgenstein thought James to have erred on this matter, which distinguishes this topic from the Ballard case and the next explicit reference we will consider. It is noteworthy that in *Principles* (835) James gives a longer explanation of his views on this subject, and if the message is one about the dangers of 'phenomenological illusion', the messenger is James.

Reference Three: §610, or, The Growing Pains of Psychology

In section 610 we have yet another new situation to comprehend. There is a cryptic mention of James, as in our previous example, but this time Wittgenstein's disapproval is more evident, and James's underlying meaning is less obvious. Wittgenstein examines a psychological investigation of the sort found frequently in *Principles*, and like the Ballard case, raises questions about the coherence of the preconceptions shaping the investigation. Section 610 occurs in a tangled series of remarks, indicative of the less-polished state of the final part of *Investigations*, Part One. As Hacker notes, both before and after §§595-610 there occur discussions of volition and intentionality (and James appears here indirectly in both contexts), and we can see connections with these remarks and §436 (Hacker claims (4:86) that the section in quotes therein is Jamesian). Another connection is his use of James's 'tip of the tongue' example at *Investigations*, p. 219 (see below). These various remarks constitute Wittgenstein's general criticism of 'experience' as an explanatory concept and the picture of the domain of psychology as akin to the physical world investigated by physics. While the remarks themselves may stand in need of substantial pruning, the point is clear enough. One cannot appeal to distinctive feelings to explain intentions, volitions and retrospective judgements of psychological states. (The latter is a mistake due to a protopicture of our minds as granting us insight into past mental states. See §§633-648.) The view (James's, ostensibly) that we *can* do this is mistaken both in terms of the distinctness of the feeling (the criteria may be unclear or altogether absent in many cases, hence Wittgenstein's talk of 'natural' and 'familiar' experiences being barren (§596)) and the use of psychological expressions such as 'I intend X' or 'I was going to do Y'. A corollary to this criticism (that experiences explain mental abilities such as finding a word) is the distinction between explanation and description, and Wittgenstein's famous insistence that philosophy can only engage in 'pure description' (§109). The criticism of James could depend in part on such a thesis: if James tries to give psychological explanations where Wittgenstein attempts to describe the grounds of grammatical confusion, we have a significant divergence of opinion regarding the use to which the 'vocabulary of psychology' is to be put.[74]

Prior to untangling these issues, the reference to James must be explicated. The section begins by raising a challenge to the reader:

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[74] Robin Haack distinguishes between Wittgenstein's 'descriptive' naturalism and the 'explanatory' variety of James and Dewey in "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19 (1982) pp. 163-172. See chapter four, below.

> Describe the aroma of coffee.—Why can't it be done? Do we lack the words? And *for what* are words lacking?—But how do we get the idea that such a description must after all be possible? Have you ever felt the lack of such a description? Have you tried to describe the aroma and not succeeded?
> ((I should like to say: "These notes say something glorious, but I do not know what." These notes are a powerful gesture, but I cannot put anything side by side with it that will serve as an explanation. A grave nod. James: "Our vocabulary is inadequate." Then why don't we introduce a new one? What would have to be the case for us to be able to?))

The location of this remark is curious: as noted, it departs from the surrounding sections rather abruptly, accordingly we may begin by discussing it in isolation. The primary interpretive questions are why Wittgenstein thinks this project of describing the aroma of coffee goes awry, and what role the mention of James is meant to play. At first glance, James seems to be suggesting that an improvement or refinement in the technical language of psychology must precede the articulation of a olfactory experience. A comment in *Principles* cited by Hacker[75] serves as a good example of this:

> "The elementary qualities of sensation, bright, loud, red, blue, hot, cold, are, it is true, susceptible of being used in both an objective and a subjective sense. They stand for outer qualities and for the feelings which these arouse. But the objective sense is the original sense; and still to-day we have to describe a large number of sensations by the name of the object from which they have most frequently been got. An orange color, an odor of violets, a cheesy taste, a thunderous sound, a fiery smart, etc., will recall what I mean. This absence of a special vocabulary for subjective facts hinders the study of all but the very coarsest of them....It is hard to focus our attention on the nameless, and so there results a certain vacuousness in the descriptive parts of most psychologists." (*Principles*, 194, cited (in brief) by Hacker at 4:532; *cf.* James, 243)

Here, as in the Ballard case, we have a possible misinterpretation of James. Certainly he seems to be arguing for a perspicuous language, an 'ideal' language in the manner of the *Tractatus*, but in the original context of *Principles*, this is a minor member of a family of language-related problems James considers. It is important to note that the main error James warns his readers about is the potential for grammatical confusions[76] arising from applying ordinary locutions in a psychological context. (I refer the reader back to chapter one, page 76*ff.*, where the concept 'memory' was applied by Gerald Edelman to successive, extraordinary contexts.) The warning about the incompleteness of descriptions of one's experience is followed by more strenuous warnings about confusing subjectivity and objectivity, and experience and its

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[75] Hacker here follows Garth Hallett's course of thinking: both identify *Principles* 194 and 243 (195 and 251 in volume one of the older Dover edition) as the likely sources of the quote, though James makes similar remarks throughout. Hallett (*Companion*, pp. 573-4) immediately discusses the issue with reference to Russell and Schlick, Hacker simply provides a quote from James. Neither analyses the true meaning of James's claims.

[76] My language is anachronistic, however, a quick glance at *Principles*, pp. 193-196 will demonstrate the affinity in question. James blames language for the frequent confusion of subjective and objective states, arguing (at 196) that "crude as such a confusion of standpoints seems to be when abstractly stated, it is nevertheless a snare into which no psychologist has kept himself at all time from falling, and which forms

epigones (remembered experience, or interpretations of experience). The most important warning of all is against the psychologist's temptation to import his or her own perspective on a situation into the state of mind of the subject under investigation. James claims this confusion leads to the philosophical puzzles over mental representation and the ontology of concepts that become pseudo-problems retarding the psychologist's work. This is the first problem in making sense of §610: James's larger concerns are overlooked, and a lesser idea is brought to the forefront of Wittgenstein's presentation.[77]

In this final reference to James in Part One of *Investigations*, a methodological point about psychology is being made, connecting this remark not with its neighbors, but with similar thoughts expressed periodically (*e.g.*, at §307, §436, §571 and in the conclusion to Part Two.) We see a good deal of self-criticism (of the ambitions of the *Tractatus*, primarily) mixed with the use of James as a kind of foil. Wittgenstein clearly thinks the claim that our vocabulary is inadequate is not plausible: his tendency at this time was to view language as complete, as capable of expressing or communicating anything one could want. The notion that language had to be purified, or that an ideal language might be constructed is clearly rejected (it was to a lesser extent in the *Tractatus* as well, though this is not the traditional view: see *ibid.*, 4.002.) The remark on the aroma of coffee, and the possibility of describing it, could be connected to Wittgenstein's thoughts on ostension and samples. It may be the case that a perfectly adequate means of describing the aroma of coffee exists, it only presupposes experience of smelling coffee, sampling different kinds of coffee, *etc.*[78] Like samples of red, these function to teach someone what coffee is, from whence one can then begin to discuss its aroma in comparison to other things.

But the comment is not simply about articulating olfactory experiences—it is seemingly meant to be analogous to a psychological confusion capable of manifestation over a wide variety of cases. James is taken (by Hacker, and perhaps Wittgenstein) to be arguing for a phenomenological language, one that would properly refer to the constituents of any experience. The psychologist could then employ this language in introspection, or in examining the introspective reports of others and comparing them with behaviour. To some extent James was advocating such a programme in *Principles*. This seems even more apparent in the later 'pure experience' writings. However, as we have seen from his cautious attitude towards introspection, this judgement that James was blindly stumbling into error must be modified: he was well aware of the potential to 'hypostatize' relations that appear firmer than is warranted. His was a reaction against earlier empiricists who inferred the constituents of the mind from the structure of language: James was consistent in arguing that this was too crude an approach. William Gavin is one James scholar

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almost the entire stock-in-trade of certain schools. We cannot be too watchful against its subtly corrupting influence." *Cf.* 230, 933.

[77] The appropriation has a clear enough motive. In a sense, James is here made to speak for all psychologists insofar as they share a mistaken view of progress and the completeness of scientific inquiry. See above, p. 109, note 50. James, I would argue, is not as bewitched by this idea as Wittgenstein imputes.

who argues that this very project excuses James from the kind of criticism here advanced by Wittgenstein (though I believe he fails to see the extent of the problem).[79] But while James was making embryonic appeals to attend to the use of language in psychology, we may also see how he may have violated his own precepts. Gavin sees two different attitudes towards language in James's work, one of which excuses James from the claim of inadequacy that initiates Wittgenstein's criticism. "Sometimes, for James, language, where language is taken as static, is deemed inadequate. But at other times a dynamic view of language—not unlike that of later Wittgenstein—can be seen in his works."[80] One may certainly agree that James was truer to his own aims when adopting a more dynamic view of language, and James was not one to rely heavily on static definitions. But his very image of those times when the stream of thought is 'on the wing' underscores James's frustrations with these more transient moments, which is precisely what we have when language is in use. The conclusion Gavin draws seems to be that embracing a more Wittgensteinian, 'dynamic' view of language allows one to overcome the inadequacies of psychological language statically taken. *Pace* Gavin, this is an overly optimistic reading of the problem Wittgenstein addresses: this means we cannot immediately excuse James from the sin imputed to him in section 610 by pointing to his more pragmatic moments vis-à-vis the language of psychology.

We are thus faced with the following interpretive options regarding the claim that 'psychology has an inadequate vocabulary': we may say that James's didn't mean it in this context (he meant something about grammatical confusions, his larger point in chapter 7). Or, it may be the case that James *did* mean it, and there is hope for improvement, refinement, *etc.*, as evidenced (perhaps) in James's coinages, such as the 'stream of thought' or 'fringes'. Finally, James might have believed the vocabulary of psychology is crude, but there is no hope: language will always be an imperfect mirror of reality. This third interpretation would coincide with much of his later thought (and the opinion of commentators like Gavin): subsequent articulations would 'stain' the earlier mass of immediate experience, but while it might reconfigure that experience, it would never 'have the last word.' I will call these positions the *minor criticism*, the *progressive* view, and the *meliorative* view, respectively.

Each of these interpretations has support in James's psychology. The minor criticism, as explained above, renders his remark as a peripheral issue for James, as can be seen from the text of the chapter in which it appears. We may presume that, once psychologists are warned about the linguistic snares awaiting them, they will pay more attention to the use of language, refining it to meet the needs of the science. The major

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[78] This is the gist of a manuscript remark expanding on §610. Hacker cites this passage (MS 162(b), p. 115 [1939-40]) at 4:532.

[79] Gavin, *William James and the Reinstatement of the Vague*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992) chapter 3. Gavin does make occasional remarks regarding the convergence of James and Wittgenstein, but the issue is not explored in depth.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 77. Gavin overlooks the many times James attempted to take notes during moments of psychotropic intoxication: these experiements showed James the problem he had set for himself. See Dmitri Tymoczko, "The Nitrous Oxide Philosopher", *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1996, pp. 93-101.

criticisms of grammatical confusions would be the greater issue, and presumably both types of error would be avoided by the circumspect psychologist. This point of view would be halfway between the optimism Wittgenstein found characteristic of the modern age, and his own 'perennial' view of linguistic bewitchment.

The progressive view is more deeply stained by this optimism about linguistic refinement. The progressive view gets support from a remark by James at *Principles*, page 656: "The nature and hidden causes of ideas will never be unraveled till the *nexus* between the brain and consciousness is cleared up." Given his cerebralism, it would seem James simply thought future experimentation and theorizing would clear up a number of confusions in psychology. The murky relations between mind and brain would be slowly made clear by science, and psychology would gain clearer explanations of why mental phenomena manifest themselves as they do; presumably the vocabulary would change along the way. Introspection, of the cautious variety that James endorsed, would contribute to this project, and presumably drive much of the linguistic change.

As for the meliorative view, this is more faithful to the later James, but the interpretation highlights precisely this difference between the psychological and philosophical James that has as of yet gone unmentioned here. Certainly James's own views tended towards meliorism throughout his career, but the *Principles* is noteworthy among his works for its tone: James in this book attempts to speak for the science, suppressing his own views to a great extent. The tone of *Principles* is markedly more positivistic than James's other writings would lead one to expect from him, and part and parcel of such a positivistic attitude is the belief that there is a fact of the matter to be explained by psychology. If James is speaking on behalf of his peers, he could not (without substantial argumentative support) foist his own meliorative views upon them. Accordingly, this is the least plausible of the three options available to us, despite its fidelity to James's own philosophical views. It seems clear that the argument of the *Principles* is one of optimism regarding the overcoming of the inadequacy of language.[81]

This leaves the minor criticism and the progressive view as live options, and I propose to refrain from choosing between the two, due to the ambivalent nature of the evidence and purposes in view. In any case there is the further question of the nature of Wittgenstein's attack. Is he criticizing psychology for construing grammatical confusions as empirical matters? Or is he attacking the exhaustive scope of one version of psychology? Or is he doing something else, say, pointing out that samples and experience are required? (This last is Hacker's claim.)

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[81] However, a more reluctant tone than the one I have described is sounded from time to time, *e.g.*, in the chapter "Association", "Truly the day is distant when physiologists shall actually trace from cell-group to cell-group the irradiations which we have hypothetically invoked. Probably it will never arrive." (558)

Wittgenstein's attitude towards the comment he appropriates may be found from an atypically harsh remark in one of his notebooks:

> "How needed is the work of philosophy is shown by James' psychology. Psychology, he says, is a science, but he discusses almost no scientific questions. His movements are merely (so many) attempts to extricate himself from the cobwebs of metaphysics in which he is caught. He cannot yet walk, or fly at all he only wriggles. Not that that isn't interesting. Only it is not a scientific activity."[82]

Wittgenstein here, as almost nowhere else in his corpus, expresses disdain or perhaps pity for James. Though no reason for this animus is directly evident, we may speculate that the very subtlety of James's error may have provoked Wittgenstein's reaction. Here a look back to §436, where Wittgenstein earlier sounded the same theme, is profitable:

> Here it is easy to get into that dead-end in philosophy, where one believes that the difficulty of the task consists in our having to describe phenomena that are hard to get hold of, the present experience that slips quickly by, or something of the kind. Where we find ordinary language too crude, and it looks as if we were having to do, not with the phenomena of every-day, but with ones that "easily elude us, and in their coming to be and passing away, produce those others as an average effect".

Regarding the notion of phenomena being 'hard to get hold of', we find a relevant comment by James at 190. "Who can be sure of the exact *order* of his feelings when they are excessively rapid?" This is repeated elsewhere, *e.g.*, in "Association" (544), which is where Wittgenstein finds his example of searching for a forgotten name. Hallett recommends the reader compare the quoted passage with James's remarks at *Principles* 249, though no direct connection is presented.[83] Likewise Hacker believes this quote is Jamesian (4:86), but he has been unable to locate the original.[84] Also of interest is the fact that this section concludes with a similar quote from Augustine (*Confessions*, bk. XI, paragraph 28), another member of the short list of Wittgenstein's admired precursors.

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[82] Wittgenstein MS 165 [ca. 1941-44], pp. 150-1 (Quoted by S. Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein*, p. 196-7.) I found it odd to characterize the *Principles* as 'discussing almost no scientific questions', as it is replete with discussions of experiments and descriptions of apparatus, not to mention scrupulous reports of quantitative data. This raises the possibility that Wittgenstein was thinking of the *Briefer Course*, James's 1892 abridgement of *Principles*, itself a popular textbook for many decades. G. E. M. Anscombe, a student and friend of Wittgenstein's in his post-war years, recalls the *Briefer Course* being the focus of Wittgenstein's attention. (I owe knowledge of this to a recent article by Jaime Nubiola in the Fall 2000 issue of *Streams of William James* (p. 3.)) This contrasts with earlier reports of the larger *Principles* being used in the pre-war years. **N.B.**: James's revised chapter "The Stream of Thought" in the *Briefer Course* has discussions of the 'if-feeling', searching for a forgotten name and fringes (all topics of interest to Wittgenstein) all in a couple of pages (176*ff.* of the 1969 Collier paperback edition).

[83] Hallet, *Companion*, p. 472.

[84] Many chapters contain tantalizingly similar remarks, but as yet I too have been unable to locate Wittgenstein's quote, which is probably a paraphrase. James's chapters "The Stream of Thought", "Conception" and "The Perception of Time" all contain passages discussing 'dawning' and 'dying' processes, which could be the source of Wittgenstein's use of 'Auftauchen' and 'Vergehen' (translated above as 'coming to be' and 'passing away', respectively). Also noteworthy are the chapters on "Association" and "Reasoning", both dealing with relevant issues treated by Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein made this point not long after his mention of James and intercephalic movements. The recurrence of this kind of remark has a plausible explanation. A major theme in the sections 327-693 is a critique of the picture of the mind as having 'ineffable' aspects, requiring extraordinary scrutiny or new language, and of psychology as awaiting its Galileo or Newton. (As my choice of language should indicate, this was a point of view that once captivated Wittgenstein himself.) Connected to this view is the picture of psychology as a 'young science', and certainly James held this view (he sometimes called the psychology of his day 'the hope of a science'[85]). Thus we may interpret §610 as one of the main cadences in the *Investigations* where subsidiary themes announce themselves and find resolution. These minor themes return us to this notion: progressivism in psychology is a delusion, and James will serve, rightly or wrongly, as the antagonist for Wittgenstein's *Bildungsroman*.

However, at this point we simply have a lonely reference to James, stationed enigmatically in an isolated location at the end of *Investigations*, Part One. Yet if Hacker's reading of the sections §591-610 is accurate, the likely target throughout this part of the manuscript is James, and the line of criticism dates back to the period of the *Blue and Brown Books*. (This is consistent with the first references we have by students to Wittgenstein's plan to lecture on James.) Hacker's admission (4:399) is interesting "§§609-10 obscurely indicate the sources of the confusion" between mental states and postulated 'atmospheres' surrounding them. "In the grip of a misconceived picture, we refuse to count what is graspable (describable) about our state as part of the specific mental state which we *postulate*." (4:398-9) James is representative of any and all thinkers on this topic: he postulates dim feelings, mental 'penumbra' setting words in relief, and so on. We will return to these passages in discussing 'implicit' references to James.

Reference Four: Part II, xi: The Tip-of-the-Tongue Phenomenon

The fourth (and final) explicit mention of James is found in Part II, section xi of *Investigations*, and concerns the topic of the relation between subjective experience and meaning, and the grammar of 'experience' itself. It is connected to an implicit reference that occurs not only in Part Two, but scattered throughout the *Nachlaß*, which regards the notion of a specific feeling attendant to individual words. The general issue (in James's text) regards the phenomenon of 'finding' objects of thought, and how the stream of thought achieves this. "Suppose we try to recall a forgotten name" James suggests. "The state of our consciousness is peculiar. There is a gap therein; but no mere gap. It is a gap that is intensely active. A sort of wraith of the name is in it, beckoning us in a give direction, making us at moments tingle with the

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[85] This in the preface to the Italian edition to *Principles* (1900). *Cf.* "A Plea for Psychology as a 'Natural Science'" in *Essays in Psychology*.

sense of our closeness, and then letting us sink back without the longed-for term." (243)[86] Here James is attempting to explain our ability to find a missing word by pointing to feelings in the stream of thought. They perform a guiding function, serving as criteria indicating to the thinker where the goal (in this case, a name) might be. Certainly, from this excerpt it is easy to conclude that James was arguing we attend to these feelings, as someone dowsing for water stares at the rod in his hands. Like earlier discussions in *Investigations* regarding private images, or 'talismans' giving meaning to words, this method would appear doomed. Wittgenstein reflects on this approach:

> "The word is on the tip of my tongue." What is going on in my consciousness? That is not the point at all. Whatever did go on was not what was meant by that expression. It is of more interest what went on in my behaviour.—"The word is on the tip of my tongue" tells you: the word which belongs here has escaped me, but I hope to find it soon. For the rest the verbal expression does no more than certain wordless behaviour.
>
> James, in writing of this subject, is really trying to say: "What a remarkable experience! The word is not there yet, and yet in a certain sense is there,—or something is there, which *cannot* grow into anything but this word."—But this is not experience at all. *Interpreted* as experience it does indeed look odd. As does intention, when it is interpreted as the accompaniment of action; or again, like minus one interpreted as a cardinal number.

The first suggestion is that introspective analysis of this phenomenon is a non-starter: attending to the behaviour this locution replaces would be more illuminating. But there is also a grammatical confusion explored in the second paragraph, and it is imputed to James, once again making him Wittgenstein's foil or object lesson. The criticism of 'experience' as an umbrella concept in psychology is apt, and has not one but two prominent victims: James was seduced by it, and for a period of time Wittgenstein was as well.[87] (Wittgenstein's rejection of 'experience' as such a concept in fact brings his position closer to James's ideal.) In the 'pure experience' writings of 1904-5 James subordinates willing, belief, perception and the stream of thought beneath 'experience', subtly bending each psychological concept to meet the needs of his (admittedly vague) ontology. Wittgenstein here is chiding both James and himself for attempting to paper over the diversity of locutions we employ to express our thoughts, feelings, intentions, *etc.* In the same discussion a line of thought reminiscent of §413 is introduced:

> The words "It's on the tip of my tongue" are no more the expression of an experience than "Now I know how to go on!"—We use them in *certain situations*, and they are surrounded by behaviour of a special kind, and also by some characteristic experiences. In particular they are frequently followed by *finding* the word. (Ask yourself: "What would it be like if human beings *never* found the word that was on the tip of their tongue?")

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[86] Note that this text is the likely source of the quotation in §610. Hallett, *Companion*, p. 713, gives the page reference, but again, no analysis of James's line of argument is to be found.

[87] See Joachim Schulte's account of the abandoned 'genealogy of psychological verbs' in *Experience and Expression: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) chapters 3-5.

> Silent 'internal' speech is not a half hidden phenomenon which is as it were seen through a veil. It is not hidden *at all*, but the concept may easily confuse us, for it runs over a long stretch cheek by jowl with the concept of an 'outward' process, and yet does not coincide with it.
>
> (The question whether the muscles of the larynx are innervated in connexion with internal speech, and similar things, may be of great interest, but not in our investigation.) (pp. 219-220)

These comments mark a return to topics explored in §§304-693, especially the 'dual process' conception of thought and speech, which gives rise to the notion of a private mental domain and its population of meanings. Two points are worth noting: the focus on 'certain situations' moves Wittgenstein away from the notion of an *Über-Begriff* and towards a pragmatic kind of pluralism regarding psychological locutions. No one concept is going to subsume all the phenomena of psychology under its grammar. Remarks in his notebooks indicate this was a live option for some time: Wittgenstein attempted to arrange his analysis in a 'genealogy' of psychological processes, in an attempt to find the substratum for the family of mental verbs, abilities, states, *etc.*[88] Secondly, the comparison with rule-following behaviour (in the form of an allusion to mathematics) and the expressions accompanying one's resumption of an activity after a lapse indicates Wittgenstein's intended replacement for the dowsing-rod conception attributed to James. But here, as previously, James has been misinterpreted.

The pages in *Principles* following this discussion of searching for a name make his meaning clear. Surprisingly, the remarks James makes are some of his fullest about the psychology of speech, and among his most Wittgensteinian.[89] James argues (*contra* the associationists of his day) that 'feelings of tendency' are the constituents of the stream of thought that do the guiding work. The central part of the stream of thought may be an image or sensation, but it is the *periphery* of the field of consciousness that 'does the work.' Thus he denies that images simply follow one after another (and an outside observer judges the agent's tendencies after the fact), but James notes that the images may command attention during recollection, while a vaguer feeling of tendency guides us to our goal. This is not a quale, but a feeling best expressed by utterances like "Now I know how to go on!" James (like Wittgenstein) points out that attempting to attend to 'something in my mind' during this process is counterproductive: if one starts searching for qualia rather than the name, the search for the name will likely fail. Given his functional view of meanings and cognitive activites, James is far less vulnerable to Wittgenstein's criticism than an empiricist like Hume, for he might agree that there is no 'mark' of the mental state of searching for a forgotten name. Rather we have characteristic feelings of frustration, activity, and focussed attention. Furthermore, we may have memories of preceding thoughts that can serve as cues, or a dim sense of certain associations that (we hope) will influence our thoughts as they unfold, realizing the tendencies we would retrospectively identify as having gotten us to our goal.

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[88] See *Remarks on Philosophy of Psychology* 1, §722; §836 (here 'experience' is used as the *Über-Begriff*); §895; and volume 2, §63; §148. See also Schulte, *op. cit.*

[89] Gavin bases much of his theory on these pages (*op. cit.*).

James discusses *familiar experiences* as a needed backdrop to these performances.[90] It is significant that after discussing the deep resonance odors, tunes and flavours may have on an individual—all common anecdotes in psychology—James turns to the influence of grammar. "[L]arge tracts of human speech are nothing but *signs of direction* in thought, of which direction we nevertheless have an acutely discriminative sense, though no definite sensorial image plays any part in it whatsoever." (244) It is remarkable that Wittgenstein never selected this comment, especially given the similarity to his own thoughts at §85, where he says "A rule stands there like a sign-post." Ideas borrowed from games and calculi are introduced in the early sections of *Investigations*, in order to clarify how language functions. Along with discussions of learning rules, following rules, and grammar, these ideas are directly applied to the concepts of understanding, meaning, and the possession of an ability—the very things James is exploring via his anecdote about a missing name. James wanted an immanent explanation for how a human being can intend to recall a name, without the name's 'being there already', and succeed. He did this by invoking the notion of feelings of tendency, rather than postulating an unfelt tendency (observed via behaviour) or pointing to a train of mental images. James pointed to a group of feelings allied with volition rather than pleasure or sensation, feelings expressible in phrases such as "His name started with a K or an R", "I think it was a German name", or "He just told me it a minute ago!" James was trying to say that such feelings (whether grammatical 'tinglings' or familiar smells) are the germ out of which the terminus-experience, or the realizing of one's goal, grows. Wittgenstein flirted with a similar notion in analysing memory reports (specifically, reports of past intentions): at §639 he tentatively states, "[o]ne would like to say that an opinion *develops*. But there is a mistake in this too."[91] In the subsequent remark we find a penetrating criticism of a Jamsian theory of mind:

> "This thought ties on to thoughts which I have had before."—How does it do so? Through a *feeling* of a tie? But how can a feeling really tie thoughts together?—The word "feeling" is very misleading here. But it is sometimes possible to say with certainty: "This thought is connected with those earlier thoughts", and yet be unable to shew the connection. Perhaps that comes later. (§640)

Certainly this is a strenuous line of criticism: James seems to be guilty of the charge made in §598: he hypostatizes feelings where there are none.[92] To be fair to James, we must recall that his theory did not postulate sensations or qualia as the 'feelings' in question; but if this is so, then James is guilty of

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[90] Both James and Wittgenstein base much of their view on prior events, training, experiences, *etc.*: this is one reason for the detailed account of memory and neural plasticity given in chapters one and two. The role of such prior events, both in science and in a philosophical analysis of psychology, must be made perspicuous.

[91] Wittgenstein never identifies the mistake. But we may speculate that the error lies in taking this metaphor to imply that opinions are incapable of permanence or stability of meaning.

[92] In his comparison of Wittgenstein's heterogeneous view of language and James's *Varieties*, Russell Goodman finds James to be on Wittgenstein's side on this issue. See "What Wittgenstein Learned from William James" *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 11(3) (1994), page 346.

introducing a stipulative definition of 'feeling' surreptitiously[93]. The continuity of the stream of thought makes James's account an improvement when compared with earlier theories of mind (Hume's impressions, for example, are much more tenuously joined), but Wittgenstein's attention is most likely focused on the fact that thoughts can have *logical* or *grammatical* connections with one another. These are not the sort of connections that are omnipresent to the thinker, rather, they emerge in specific situations where we bring those connections into use (either by employing one of the connections, or citing a rule explaining correct usage.) Wittgenstein's own beliefs are intimated in the final line: accounting for the continuity of thought need not take place in the here and now. (This is a crucial point for my thesis, which will be developed in chapter four.)

The remark that opinions develop is not an isolated one: Wittgenstein discusses 'germinal experiences' in several places (p. 217 in *Investigations*, with copious variants in the *Nachlaß*) and in one place the discussion occurs in connection with James (on the issue of the sense in which a thought is already in mind when the performance of a sentence begins).[94] This is a good example of convergence, despite Wittgenstein's criticism therein of James's treating intention like an experience. They were wrestling with the same problems, and Wittgenstein's break with 'experience' was more definitive than anything we see in James.[95] This can be more clearly seen by considering the preceding topic in conjunction with a 'hidden' reference to James which occurs in an earlier section of *Investigations*, Part Two.

Veiled relations: Part 2, vi: (The Haloes of Words)

It is perhaps indicative of the unpolished nature of the later passages in *Investigations* that a hidden paraphrase of James should be among the most straightforward and comprehensible criticism of James's true position. Section six of Part II of *Investigations* provides an instance of what we might call a 'covert' commentary on James.[96] In the manuscript material for much of this discussion it is clearly James who serves as the source of the view Wittgenstein criticizes. Like the Ballard case and the 'argument from inadequacy'[97] of §610, Wittgenstein here uses James as something of a foil.

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[93] There is a precendent for such a claim: James did say in "The Many and the One" that he was 'refining' the meaning of 'experience' (MEN, p. 23.)

[94] *Last Writings on Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 1, §843. The index of this volume lists a half-dozen other references, some evincing Wittgenstein's willingness to use this notion, others indicating dissatisfaction. Other passages can be found in *Zettel*.

[95] Certainly Richard Gale and Marcus Ford would point to the post-1905 writings to argue that James also 'cut the cord' regarding 'pure' experience.

[96] A close look a Part Two reveals a great deal of material pertaining to Jamsian psychology. Sections ii, v, vi, viii, xi (by far the longest section), and xiii all analyze topics expounded by James in *Principles*. Section x even concludes with what appears to be a poke at James, reworking one of his phrases.

[97] I borrow this coinage from E. Gellner, *Words and Things* (Harmondsworth UK: Penguin Books, 1959).

Part Two, section six concerns the notion that words carry with them a sense of their meaning, "a 'corona' of lightly indicated uses." (p. 181) This section invites us to consider the views of an anonymous, and presumably hypothetical psychological theorist who offers this picture as an explanation of intention. Wittgenstein then engages in a discussion with this interlocutor, in order to unravel their account of how an agent means what s/he says.

> Suppose someone said: every familiar word, in a book for example, actually carries an atmosphere with it in our minds, a 'corona' of lightly indicated uses.—Just as if each figure in a painting were surrounded by delicate shadowy drawings of scenes, as it were in another dimension, and in them we saw the figures in different contexts.—Only let us take this assumption seriously!—Then we see that it is not adequate to explain *intention*. (*ibid.*)

James certainly seems to have used this notion (variously expressed as a fringe, suffusion, overtone, and penumbra) as part of an explanation of intention[98] and the 'felt intimacy and vividness' of memory. He also relied on 'fringes' to explain word meaning. It is important to note here how close this comes to Wittgenstein's position: for his treatment of aspect seeing (section xi) revolves around questions of whether the interpretation under which one sees something is 'contained' in the experience of seeing it.

The notion of a halo of meaning surrounding a word runs afoul of Wittgenstein's remarks on private languages and mental talismans. Wittgenstein does not deny that 'inner' experiences can accompany the employment of a work, he only denies this serves to explain meaning or our ability to understand language. There are also criterial problems surrounding the picture of a semantic corona. Later in section vi Wittgenstein argues:

> The meaning of a word is not the experience one has in hearing or saying it, and the sense of a sentence is not a complex of such experiences.—(How do the meanings of the individual words make up the sense of the sentence "I still haven't seen him yet"?) The sentence is composed of the words, and that is enough.
>
> Though—one would like to say—every word has a different character in different contexts, at the same time there is *one* character it always has: a single physiognomy. It looks at us.—But a face in a *painting* looks at us too. (p. 181)

The notion of meaning as a physiognomic phenomenon is a recurrent theme in the later *Investigations*, emerging as a resolution to paradoxes surrounding word meanings, thinking, and aspect seeing. Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka[99] argue it is evidence of Wittgenstein's pervasive physicalism, though I shall argue their interpretation is not persuasive. What is noteworthy for our purposes is what comes next in Wittgenstein's

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[98] Wittgenstein's lexicon differs somewhat, but I do not take this as disconfirming. As they appear in Wittgenstein's writings, critical remarks about 'atmospheres', *etc.*, unify many of Wittgenstein's remarks concerning understanding (e.g., §609), reference and intention, memory, and volition, as can be seen by noting the appearance of such metaphors throughout the relevant discussions. Frequently, talk of mental atmospheres or haloes is compared with *or replaced by* talk of gestures. See *e.g.*, §671-90.

[99] *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.)

text: he discusses the notion of an 'if-feeling', a distinctive quale that accompanies all utterances of the word. This feeling is distinct from a 'but-feeling', an 'and-feeling' and so on, and presumably would guide us in selecting one word over another. The idea stems from *Principles* 238, and was discussed by Wittgenstein in many notebooks and typescripts[100], as well as featuring prominently in his lectures on philosophy of psychology.[101] Wittgenstein's point throughout is that the mental imagery or feelings is what we might call an epiphenomenon of properly functioning language. We do not need such stuff to mean what we say; indeed, a hearer would never be able to tell if we changed our imagery during the utterance of the word.[102] Subsidiary to this point about the feelings' lack of a functional role in meaning is a criterial argument about how we distinguish one unique feeling for each word. Is this not a strange coincidence, where our psychology and language coincide? "Are you sure" asks Wittgenstein, "that there is a single if-feeling, and not perhaps several?" (p. 181) He points to the variety of application-contexts into which a word like 'if' may fit, and wonders why there is a single feeling. How could it serve as a criterion to indicate which grammatical use fits a given context? (It is interesting to note that on the following page Wittgenstein treats the problem in a manner resembling the contemporary 'inverted spectrum' problem: he considers a person who inverts or blends the feelings for different words and discusses epistemological problems arising therefrom.) Wittgenstein's other line of attack (not fully extant in *Investigations*, but found elsewhere) is to raise examples of proper names: do they earn unique feelings as they enter the lexicon? How would this happen? Is there, to use his example, a 'Beethoven-feeling'?[103] Wittgenstein's answer to this question is equivocal: he does not deny such feelings, but admits to unclarity regarding the concept.

James's point in the original context of the *Principles* is one we have discussed before: as far as consciousness during language use is concerned, we attend to the center (what constitutes the center is retrospectively identifiable as an image or a sound, and James notes that this is poor introspective comfort[104]), but the periphery is where the work is being done. Furthermore, James takes care to remark that the fringe[105] of a word involves its intended meaning in a sentential context, thus Wittgenstein's jibe about the possibility of multiple if-feelings misses its target. "I believe that in all cases where the words are *understood*, the total idea may be and usually is present not only before and after the phrase has been spoken, but also whilst each separate word is uttered. It is the overtone, halo, or fringe of the word, *as*

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[100] *E.g.*, *The Brown Book*, §1; *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*: volume 1, §335; *Remarks*, vol. 2, §264; *Zettel*, §188; *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 1 §§361-378.
[101] *E.g.*, Rhees' notes from 1936, "The Language of Sense Data and Private Experience" Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions: 1912-1951*, J. Klagge and A. Nordmann, eds., (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993) p. 336. *Cf. Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophy of Psychology 1946-7*, p. 56ff.
[102] See *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, *loc. cit.*
[103] *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 2: The Inner and the Outer*, G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) p. 3. The remark dates *ca.* 1948-9.
[104] See the introspective fallacy discussed at *Principles*, 189-90.
[105] Recall the distinction between 'fringes' and 'feelings of tendency' above, p. 29*ff*.

spoken in that sentence." (*Principles* 270-1)[106] Thus we have once again a case of an uncharitable reading of James, for his point could have been more favourably presented. Wittgenstein preferred to stress the contingency of these mental feelings, and deny their role in explaining linguistic abilities.

This appears to be the most damning criticism of Jamsian empiricism, for if we attempt to construe his theory faithfully, we guide him towards the horns of a dilemma. If the fringe or halo feelings are taken as substantive parts of mental experience, their functional role seems hard to imagine (how is the meaning 'seen', and if the 'fringe' is itself a sign, what it *its* meaning?); moreover, James is painted in the same colours as the conventional empiricism he rejected. The alternative is not much of an improvement: if we characterize the halo as a mental penumbra, something on the periphery of consciousness, and hence something of which we may not be fully aware, how do we *know* we are actually feeling it? Could it not be the case that there is nothing dimly felt, and we are simply positing this feeling after the fact? If we paint James's psychology as reliant upon such ethereal, possibly illusory feelings, we violate his empiricism, or at the very least we demand a great deal of explanatory work from a tenuous form of data. Wittgenstein's suggestion that there might be many sorts of linguistic performances that lack such feelings surrounding words raises further doubts about James's functional penumbra of the stream of thought. However, it takes only a minor adjustment to render James's account in a more acceptable form.

This account of words carrying with them a 'feeling of being guided' (to use our earlier language regarding Jamesian concepts) supports Wittgenstein's view of the role grammatical rules play in guiding thought, though such rules do not constitute it *per se*. Rules once learnt, and thus 'internalized', are not the sort of things that need enter consciousness, though our intentional actions must reflect prior learning. This is a point James would easily admit, stressing as he does the dynamic, efficacious nature of awareness, and his view of linguistic meaning. To speak fluently, we construct sentences 'on the wing', without attending to our inner feelings, or taking individual words as static objects. If anything, we attend to the situation we aim to describe, if that is our goal, and James did point to this as a mental sign-post which could guide performance. We need only reconfigure his dim feelings of tendency as the felt accompaniments of familiar actions (akin to the kinaesthetic sensations concomitant with locomotion, *e.g.*,) to have a picture more harmonious with Wittgenstein's. The dynamic process of speaking need not have conscious fringes serving as glue to lend unity to the event, but the accompaniments (like the bodily sensations that come with throwing a baseball) may assist in recalling that train of action, or in modifying learning. Thus they have a role to play, in recollection, if not in performance. Our familiarity with language, including our internalization of grammatical rules and rhetorical 'gestures', make speech fluent, effortless, something of

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[106] Here in a footnote James makes the interesting claim that were one to recite inwardly the words of another, the meaning would come in fits and starts, as grammatical clauses reached their resolution. See 271n40. I take this to suggest that the grammatical structure, as it manifests itself in performance and therefore over time, shapes or informs the character of the thought expressed by the sentence. This is not dissimilar to the 'physiognomy' of a gesture, or a musical phrase.

which we need not be continually conscious. We refer back to those gestures when we try to capture our meaning.

We might clarify this idea with reference to the earlier notion of games, a model from the early sections of *Investigations* that has not been much considered thus far. As the moves within a game are an expression of the player's thinking, linguistic performances—retrospectively identified as rule-abiding, perhaps—are the embodiment of thought and that to which we usually point to explain it. James would, to this extent, agree with Wittgenstein's epiphenomenalism here regarding verbal fringes—the particular, subjective feeling accompanying a word does not do the work of meaning, but a feeling of 'knowing how to go on' does. (Retrospectively, this takes a different form: we point to the grammar of our earlier sentences as evidence we meant what we said[107]; alternatively, we explain errors as unintended, constructing an improved expression of our meaning.) Wittgenstein's point in using James was different here: he railed against the idea that individual words have inner talismans to determine their meaning. (There was a further point about experience at work here: Wittgenstein thought that talk of experiences or feelings was oddly applied to normal cases (such as those under consideration here); James is guilty of warping the vocabulary of the unusual to try and describe ordinary goings-on[108].) The resulting account is strikingly pragmatic: we come to understand the meaning of 'and', 'if', *etc.*, by attending to how they are used, not by attending to our subjective feelings. Their uses of the passage are quite different, though their conclusions on grammar are similar, particularly in their results.

As an aside, I would like to offer a possible interpretation to supplement the preceding account. In accepting Wittgenstein's criticisms of fringes as epiphenomena, we do seem to sacrifice part of James's philosophy of mind. Certainly he thought there was *some* role for subjective feelings associated with a word. (I would argue that given his early Fregean view of thoughts, Wittgenstein would have had less interest in the possibility.) If we accept James's genetic story of dualism, we can see how one might 'bleed off' subjective qualities associated with a personal history of a word, and turn these into a 'private halo' around that word. Its public, objective qualities would include how we use the word, and thus the subjective connotations would lack a functional role in language. So 'ochre', *e.g.*, may have different 'dim connotations' for a person than 'red', but in most cases of public use these are ignored. It would be possible, however, keep a diary in which word selection according to these connotations makes sense. One could there write of, *e.g.*, banana-coloured wallpaper, in order to trigger one's own memories of 'Nana's banana muffins'. But even *in foro interno*, we might admit that most personal connotations drop out over time: an adult no longer remembers his or her earliest experiences surrounding words uttered as a small child. They use those same words now, but with no dim fringes other than the grammatical rules learned

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[107] Wittgenstein did note, however, that this was not the only normal way to proceed: one may explain what one really meant by giving evidence of one's sincerity, earnestness, *etc.* See §677.
[108] The point was made earlier in the text, at §596.

in childhood. The project of fostering one's own reactions to words could serve a *special function* in life, particularly if one writes regularly, but this would be a far cry from a general theory of meaning. One could see James's potential interest in such an endeavour, without abandoning the line of criticism displayed above.[109]

The remaining veiled references: Emotion and Will

In the *Nachlaß* we find two further cases involving James's ideas or utterances. These centre around the feeling associated with (or constitutive of) volition, and those concerning emotion. In both cases (and in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* 2 (§§321*ff*) the cases are intentionally interwoven, along with ideas connected with reference two in *Investigations*) Wittgenstein's concern is with the close connection between feelings and psychological states. However, neither of these themes made it to the *Investigations* in any form clear enough to involve comparison with James. The will is mentioned at §611, after the direct reference (number three) discussed above. The tenor of the comment, denying that willing can be assimilated to talk of experience, seems rather clearly aimed at James. The nature of the will was an important part of 'unfinished business' at the end of Part One, the unpolished exposition of the theme perhaps one of the reasons behind the subsequent appearance of a further discussion of volition occurring in Part Two, section eight. However, as Stewart Candlish has noted, the target of the critical remarks may well be someone mentioned by James: Wundt, and not James, seems to be the author of the theory most clearly under attack in these passages.[110] Wittgenstein's tendency to obscure references complicates matters, for it is not clear who he thought he was utilizing.

As for emotion, comments in part two, section eleven, contain the relevant thoughts. These thoughts seem primarily devoted to exploring the role bodily feelings play in constituting as well as expressing emotional states, and on the polymorphous nature of the family of states we label 'emotions.' In the background here is the famous James-Lange theory of emotion (this comes out more clearly in the *Nachlaß* remarks, and in Wittgenstein's recorded lectures), which is taken to mean that bodily reactions cause the mental phenomena we call emotions. Wittgenstein's use of this theory is problematic for familiar reasons: he does not command a clear view of James's meaning, and takes a simplistic version as a launching-point for a different investigation. As these remarks have had the James 'bleached out of them' during the revision and editing process, we may well regard these issues as extraneous to our investigation. Given the

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[109] Note that this example uses public words, not the stipulative definitions of private sensations considered by Wittgenstein.

[110] Steward Candlish, "'Das Wollen ist auch nur eine Erfahrung'", Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, Robert L. Arrington and Hans-Johann Glock, eds., (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 203-226. Candlish reinforces the thesis that James was a frequent target of Wittgenstein's, however, here he argues that Wundt (as presented by James) is the main target of Wittgenstein's writings on the will. James (and Russell) form subsidiary targets. Thus Candlish argues "James, we might say, is from Wittgenstein's point of view half-right: he has rejected a spurious phenomenon [a feeling of innervation accompanying any voluntary act], but has not made the final step of rejecting all phenomena." (p. 209)

redundancy shown given the other uses of James, and given this effacement, Wittgenstein may have come to a similar conclusion.

Detritus: the remnants of James in Wittgenstein's texts and lectures

There are similes and occasional phrases that strongly suggest appropriation from James, however conclusive historical/textual evidence is absent. They constitute the evidential detritus of this project, and as such they pose problems for anyone arguing for an affinity or line of influence connecting James and Wittgenstein. For, if one takes these commonalities as the focal point for comparison, it indeed seems that Schulte's thesis (that James provided stimulating examples, nothing more) is correct.[111] Hermeneutically they are less than satisfactory, for they resemble the references to James's ideas insofar as they are put to new uses by Wittgenstein. Further complicating the matter is the fact that other philosophers, known to have influenced Wittgenstein, produced similar images, in some cases even borrowing them from James. However, just as they psychologist must take account of the fancies and illusions entertained by a mind, so must we include these examples to complete our picture.

One case of the recycling of a Jamesian image is Wittgenstein's mention of a baby acquiring a reaction to a flame, which was discussed by James at *Principles*, 36-7 (*cf.* 681). It was also rendered diagrammatically (see figure 3-1, below). Wittgenstein discusses something similar at §§472-480, with no surrounding development of a criticism of a competing philosophical view.

Apart from this image, we find other similes which invite comparison with James. For example, on page 224 of *Investigations* we find Wittgenstein using a simile to make a point about the hidden diversity of language: "We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike." Is this derived from Frege's talk of a function as akin to clothing in "Negation"[112], where he compares a function to a coat "which cannot stand upright on its own, but to that end requires someone around whom it is wrapped", or could it have come from James? In "The Stream of Thought" James uses similar imagery, in the discussion of searching for a forgotten name, the very passage Wittgenstein referred to so frequently.[113] There James described moments when

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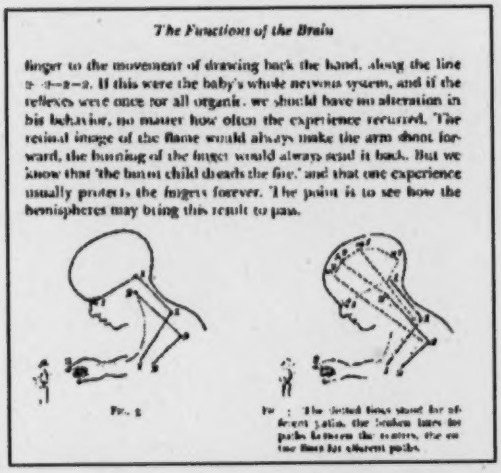
[111] *Experience and Expression*, p. 9.

[112] The essay appears in Geach, trans., *Logical Investigations*. The analogy occurs at p. 52. More apropos to the topic under consideration, Frege also wrote of thoughts being "clothed in the perceptible garb of a sentence", both in "Thoughts" (*ibid.*, p. 5), and in an essay written in the last year of his life. See "Erkenntnisquellen der Mathematik und der mathematischen Naturwissenschaften" in Hermes, H., Kambartel, F., and Kaulbach, F. (eds.), 1969, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner; second edition, revised and expanded, 1983).

[113] By now it may be tedious to dwell on the point, but *Principles* 238-261 (the digression on 'feelings of tendency') serve as the basis for Wittgenstein's treatment of at least five themes ('if' feelings, the notion a thought is complete before it is expressed, feelings of tendency, the Ballard case and the inadequacy of psychological language), constituting at least twenty-two explicit references in *Investigations* and the

"the rhythm of a lost word may be there without a sound to clothe it" (244), and this too would have been an interesting metaphor for Wittgenstein.



The Functions of the Brain

finger to the movement of drawing back the hand, along the line a–a–a. If this were the baby's whole nervous system, and if the reflexes were once for all organic, we should have no alteration in his behavior, no matter how often the experience recurred. The retinal image of the flame would always make the arm shoot forward, the burning of the finger would always send it back. But we know that 'the burnt child dreads the fire,' and that one experience usually protects the fingers forever. The point is to see how the hemispheres may bring this result to pass.

FIG. 8

Figure 3-1: The Baby and Candle in *The Principles of Psychology*

Regarding the notion of the 'soul' of words fleeing upon repetition (see Part 2, p. 214) Hacker gives probable attribution to James (Hacker 4:333). The location in question is *Principles* 726, where he discusses the thought-experiment of repeating a word until its meaning seems to disappear. James says of the word: "its body is indeed there, but its soul is fled." This kind of coincidence underwrites the discussion of meaning, aspect-seeing, and the analysis of 'experience' found throughout *Investigations*, Part Two.

One example frequently encountered in Wittgenstein's writing whose origin is obscure is the event of a toothache: it is used frequently in *Philosophical Remarks* (which may pre-date Wittgenstein's reading of *Principles*), and it appears in *Investigations* at §257, and again at §665: the first talks of the backdrop of human activity that must be in place to give an act of naming sense, and the second discusses the invariance of 'abracadabra' when that name is given to your current experiential state (Wittgenstein here highlights the kind of bivalence James tries to analyse in 'Does "Consciousness" Exist?') The relevant discussion of toothache is found in James's chapter "Sensation" in *Principles*. There we find James's discussion of 'pain space' and the relation between previous experiences and our ability to 'situate' a current experience or sensation, such as a toothache (see above, p. 127). Wittgenstein's discussion of toothache *vis-à-vis*

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relevant typescripts. It is difficult to find a similarly fruitful text elsewhere in Wittgenstein's known reading.

'experience' at *Investigations*, p. 208, certainly suggests he was speaking with James's thoughts in mind. (But again, Frege is a contender: see his talk of 'the owner of a pain' in "Thoughts".)

At *Principles*, p. 238, James discusses the phenomenon of searching for a forgotten name. This too was frequently referred to in the *Nachlaß*. However, as the same philosophical point was made by Wittgenstein in the 'tip of the tongue' discussion of section xi, I do not intend to discuss these remarks, which seem to have been supplanted by those extant in *Investigations*.

There is one uncanny phrase in Part 2 of *Investigations* that is worth mention. At page 192 Wittgenstein, seemingly as a jibe at one of his targets, offers this advice: "Don't regard a hesitant assertion as an assertion of hesitancy." It may surprise some to learn that Wittgenstein is here returning James's advice, for he once stressed a similar distinction. "[T]he feeling of an absence is *toto caelo* other than the absence of a feeling." (*Principles*, 243; *Cf. Briefer Course*, 292, 178, where the same form is applied to slightly different slogans.) Such material is of lesser philosophical interest, but it does underscore the thesis that the *Principles* was frequently lurking in the background of the *Investigations*.[114]

Finally, if we extend our view beyond the *Investigations*, we find one more interesting coincidence of imagery. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein makes a well-known remark about 'hinge propositions', specifically, the remark was about mathematical propositions remaining unmoved while disputes about other propositions turn on them. A similar thought is expressed in *Pragmatism*, in the lecture "Some Metaphysical Problems Pragmatically Considered": "See then how all these ultimate questions turn, as it were, upon their hinges; and from looking backwards upon principles..." (*Writings of William James*, p. 404.) James is treating metaphysical propositions in the same way, and while Wittgenstein might have objected to much of the substance of this remark (certainly he would have pointed to differences regarding the application of mathematical propositions versus metaphysical ones) the metaphor may have caught his attention.[115]

Rückblick

At first glance the mention of James in *Investigations* hardly supports the thesis that Wittgenstein was developing his thoughts in James's direction. The remarks on James are critical for the most part, they

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[114] Other moments from the *Principles* arise in the transcriptions of Wittgenstein's lectures. In his lectures of 1946-7, James's example of an utterance, 'The pack of cards in on the table' (from "The Stream of Thought), is used to begin Wittgenstein's discussions for the year. (WLPP, p. 8) Further in the same semester, we find consideration of James's account of 'preparing to say something' (*ibid.*, 56). Here Wittgenstein casts James as naïve introspectionist, probably echoing Köhler's views. See p. 73.

[115] Such influence depends on an assumption, *viz.*, that Wittgenstein read *Pragmatism*, or discussed its substance with someone. The reader should note that in considering the 'detritus' of the data for my thesis,

involve some distortion or misinterpretation, and Wittgenstein develops his position in response to the ideas (purportedly) put forth by James. Indeed, on Wittgenstein's reading, James holds some unusual views. He thinks there can be discrete thoughts outside of language; he may have noticed that intercephalic movements give rise to a picture of thinking as inside the head, but he did not reject (with Wittgenstein) the picture of psychophysical interaction, nor did he recognize the level of grammatical confusion endemic to psychology. On the contrary, James seems to have had a faith in scientific progress that was anathema to Wittgenstein. Finally, James was guilty of positing ethereal mental entities, pictured as haloes, fringes or shadows, that were alleged to explain intending, expectation, recollection, in short, to serve as the glue holding our mental lives together. As is hopefully clear by now, this is not a fair reading of James's work. We may excuse Wittgenstein for failing to read the *Essays in Radical Empiricism* or *The Meaning of Truth*, but his grasp of the ideas expressed in the *Principles* was poor, suggesting a rather superficial and selective reading.

The misreading of *Principles* is a significant event. Wittgenstein takes a variety of themes borrowed from a handful of chapters of the *Principles* (chapters 9, 10, 15 and 16), uses them to 'seed' his reflections[116], and these are gradually pared down to a few brief phrases that serve various purposes in the manuscript of *Investigations*. This use is consistent with Wittgenstein's lectures. Both the number of themes considered and the frequency of explicit mention of James decrease from manuscripts notes to typescripts to the surviving drafts for *Investigations*. Discussions of emotion and will, for example, become 'hidden' commentaries on James, whereas the Ballard Case and James's remarks on intercephalic movements are preserved in a clearer light. James presents the clearest target insofar as he represents a champion of scientific progress in psychology (§610), and as he seeks to explain linguistic performances via underlying sensations or feelings of tendency. Clearly these latter instances run afoul of Wittgenstein's *Weltanschauung*, perhaps leading to his remark on pragmatism found in *On Certainty* (*supra*). Taken individually, it is tempting to regard James's philosophical ideas as errors displayed and corrected for didactic purposes in *Investigations*. (One would anticipate that, were this the case, they would appear much earlier in the text than they currently do. This would put them on a level with Augustine's theory of language, sense-data theories, and the picture theory of meaning.)

But for all this we must note the great importance the text had for Wittgenstein. References in the *Nachlaß*, simply in terms of their number, suggest that Wittgenstein thought the *Principles* was a very important book. Certainly *The Varieties of Religious Experience* does not make its way into Wittgenstein's later writings in any similar way. Wittgenstein seems to have thought the work contained some very seductive

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I am here and here alone relaxing the hermeneutic procedures employed in expounding the relation between the two thinkers and their texts.

[116] Thus Wittgenstein wrote in 1939-40: "I believe that my originality (if that is the right word) is an originality belonging to the soil rather than to the seed. (Perhaps I have no seed of my own.) Sow a seed in

errors, that it was 'close to the mark' in some sense, and thus it was *worthy* of such an inquisition. If we combine our knowledge of the broader context of James's original remarks, with a fair understanding of Wittgenstein's project, we find an uncanny result: Wittgenstein in reacting to the 'straw James' developed a point of view exhibiting many key features of radical empiricism. His work has the added benefit of pointing out how James's work failed to achieve his philosophical aims, by superceding it.

Wittgenstein's own position as it emerges shows the beginnings of a radical empiricist picture of his own. The insistence that subjective 'haloes' that may surround words or images do not hold things together is especially noteworthy. His frequent denial that there is any one guiding concept unifying psychological phenomena, along with his rejection of both behaviorism and introspectionism, lend his work both the pluralism James exhibited, and the *tertium quid*, the new option related to old ideas, that was intended to lead the reader out of a set of familiar philosophical tangles. Wittgenstein's *tertium quid* was distinctly his own, with Fregean influences mixing with Schophenauerian concerns, Köhler's psychology rubbing shoulders with Moore's paradox. Permeating all the topics and colouring all these debts was his intense—his singular—concern with language, which sets his work apart from James, as well as from so many others. The traditional metaphysical positions of idealism, solipsism, realism, *etc.*, were each treated as getting at something important, but none were embraced. Wittgenstein's view was metaphysically agnostic as was James's, consisting more in a rejection of traditional pictures than anything else. But 'agnosticism' is perhaps inaccurate, as I shall try to describe parts of Wittgenstein's view that do constitute a group of commitments. These commitments will be to immanentism, indeterminacy, pluralism, or what we might collectively call 'humanism.'

Conclusion: The Role of Real Human Beings in Philosophy

The meaning of Wittgenstein's quip that James was 'a real human being' is opaque, despite the detailed report preserved for our benefit by Drury. James exuded many features in his writing that undoubtedly would have impressed Wittgenstein. His humility, humour, and unpretentious manner of exploring things, along with his frequent use of concrete examples and language, would all have aroused Wittgenstein's admiration. Wittgenstein moreover treated James as a real human being in exploring his errors, and in trying to isolate the temptations that led James astray in his philosophizing. The treatment is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's use of Augustine, with two notable differences. In James's case the textual source has rather more *gravitas*—it is after all his psychology that is examined, not his Confessions—and the material Wittgenstein chooses to include is much richer and more diverse.[117]

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my soil and it will grow differently than it would in any other soil." *Culture and Value*, G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, first edition, 1980) p. 36e.

[117] Augustine's contributions are (in order of their appearance in *Investigations*): language-learning (§§1-32), a paradox surrounding the knowledge of time (§89), a similar one involving our ability to articulate knowledge about 'manifest and ordinary' things (§436), and the will (§618).

We might consider Wittgenstein's criticisms of James to be inspired by this admiration, but motivated by a desire to articulate a more human point of view. This motivation may not have come from James (certainly we must consider not only the influence of Tolstoy, Schopenhauer, Kraus, *et al.*, but the possibility of Wittgenstein's own spontaneity.) The search for a 'human point of view' may show itself in what (or who) Wittgenstein chose to criticize. His rejections of pseudo-scientific explanations of how language or thought manifest themselves, or his rejection of the notion that psychology awaits its Leibniz or Newton to create a new language to capture its phenomena, such modern pictures threatened (from his point of view) to make progress look greater than it is. This criticism of the scientific *Weltbild* is harmonious with James's philosophy to a large degree, even if this convergence occurs at the expense of James's own reputation. From our point of view, William James and Wittgenstein were 'real human beings' for a number of reasons, which might serve as a final note of their similarity. They returned again and again to a subjective, concrete point of view, among other ways by retracing how they learned to think the way they did. In effect, they sought their own natural history in order to gain new insights into their philosophical pathologies. Both 'domesticated' philosophical problems, relating them to, and ideally, situating them in a real human life. Their philosophical views were aimed at application in life: they were not interested in giving the 'view from nowhere'. This immanent context led both thinkers to emphasize the variety of philosophy's subject matter, and the variety of ways of looking at a problem.[118] Along the way, through pragmatism, or linguistic therapy, they democratized philosophy itself, showing that no one problem or method or theory governed all others. And they were both human in that they erred, they were misled by certain aims, pictures, and this survives in the bodies of work we possess.

I will devote the concluding chapter to an amplification of these remarks.

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[118] Baker and Hacker, writing about Wittgenstein, put this well: "the primary role of many of his grammatical descriptions is not to disclose unity beneath apparent diversity, but rather to emphasize diversity in the face of apparent homogeneity." (2:24)

Chapter Four – A Deeper Grammar

> Man possesses the ability to construct languages capable of expressing every sense, without having any idea how each word has meaning or what its meaning is—just as people speak without knowing how the individual sounds are produced.
>
> Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.
>
> It is not humanly possible to gather immediately from it what the logic of language is.
>
> Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes.
>
> The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated.
>
> *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 4.002

Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to point beyond the criticisms of James found in *Investigations*, in order to see how Wittgenstein's own view might constitute a form of radical empiricism. This will involve overcoming a traditional prejudice, *viz*., that talk of any substantive philosophical commitment, let alone one as foreign to Wittgenstein's experience as empiricism, is off the mark. 'Radical' empiricism, however, is not frequently discussed, and does not match the positions most frequently targeted by Wittgenstein, such as Fregean realism or classic phenomenalism. While those who have noted the affinity between James and Wittgenstein have, for the most part, focussed on the pragmatic aspects of Wittgenstein's thought, I intend here to explicate a broader philosophical picture, or what I have been calling a *Weltanschauung*.[1] As the term indicates, such pictures are personal and often quite idiosyncratic, and I do not intend to argue for complete isomorphism between the Jamsian and Wittgensteinian views. I will instead attempt something more controversial: I will argue that Wittgenstein's view constitutes an improvement over James's, a kind of 'revamping' of the picture we find in the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

To make this claim plausible, I will need to explain several salient points about Wittgenstein's later thought, all relating to the notion of 'depth' and interpretation. It will also be necessary to take another look at James's radical empiricism, particularly his notion of a 'world of pure experience.'

Language-games and Physiognomy

One notion that emerges from recent Wittgenstein literature is that of a 'primary language game.' The claim (as put forward by Hintikka and Hintikka) is that games where there is room for interpretation, or

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[1] See Wittgenstein's consideration of the term at §122.

doubt, are built upon a more straightforward form of language. These games, the sort learned by children when acquiring language, involve the identification or predication of a variety of states, some physical, some psychological. Here the criteria for attributing a description to something or someone are unambiguous, though (where the object is a person) they usually involve subtle perceptions of physiognomy.[2] Thus children learn to state whether a parent is happy or sad, hungry or sleepy, from observing fine details of their facial expressions and overall comportment. These Hintikka and Hintikka call 'physiognomic' language games, in part to distinguish them from 'physiological' games.[3]

This is an astute combination of two aspects of Wittgenstein's discussion in *Investigations*, one from quite early in the text, the other less familiar because of its home in the *Investigations*' hinterlands. Wittgenstein indeed devoted much time and effort to exploring the phenomena of facial recognition, and our tendency to see even a crude drawing of a face *as* a human face. (Even in a cartoon emotional characteristics are easy to portray, and may be identified by neophytes with great accuracy.) Part of his analysis of aspect seeing in Part Two, section xi, was directed towards this phenomenon (p. 209, 219). In the Hintikkas' account, primary language games are for Wittgenstein typified by physiognomic games[4], and upon these we build more sophisticated 'secondary language games', where criteria are more diversified, and grammar is more complex. Like Edelman's description of the move from primary consciousness to its higher-level counterpart, here there is a qualitative shift in the character of human life and expression. Where before there was simple awareness of things, now there is the possibility of reflection, retrospection, anticipation, and discriminating oneself, and one's environment from the larger world.

But Hintikka and Hintikka attempt to assimilate Wittgenstein's view to ideas popular in the profession today, specifically to a form of physicalistic realism.[5] They claim that because primary language games refer to aspects of physical objects, Wittgenstein's ontology was at bottom a physicalist one. This is accompanied by the contentious claim that Wittgenstein's primary reason for favouring physiognomic

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[2] Impairments in this ability (due to brain injury or other deficit), such as visual aphasia or prosopagnosia (the inability to recognize faces) underscore the importance and ubiquity of this skill, which is widely ramified throughout cognition. There is also a neurological condition called *aprosodia*, which is the inability to comprehend or execute emotive qualities of gestures or utterances.

[3] *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) chapter 10.

[4] See §568, *e.g.* Wittgenstein's preoccupation with physiognomy ties into many facets of his work. The ability to recognize gestures, expressions, *etc.*, by their physiognomic characteristics is important if we are to recognize the diverse particulars constituent of a family of locutions (context also considerably aids this.) James was also interested in this connection between physiognomy and cognition of psychological states; see, e.g., *Principles* 293: "Each [emotion regarding the self] has its own peculiar physiognomical expression."

[5] Like so many commentaries on the *Investigations*, the Hintikka's work confirms some important points even though I disagree with their overall interpretation. They share the 'continuity thesis', thus supporting Wittgenstein's claim that the *Investigations* should be read in comparison to the *Tractatus*. They also note Wittgenstein's abandonment of the search for a 'primary language' in 1929. However, while they note that this language was pictured as a phenomenological one by Wittgenstein, they assume that the rejection entails the adoption of a physicalist language.

games over other possible primary language games was his streak of Tolstoyan romanticism. (Hintikka and Hintikka, p. 275.) While they are probably right concerning Wittgenstein's favourable attitude towards Tolstoy, it is wrong to attribute his failure to adopt a decorous metaphysical view to a vague moral qualm we cannot fully understand. Whatever the reason, we should indeed regard Wittgenstein's primary language games as typically involving physiognomic criteria. The inclusion of this finely-tuned perceptual phenomena will make it possible to describe much of the data of psychology in a naturalistic, publicly observable manner.

A World of Pure Surfaces: Phenomenalism and the Notion of 'Depth'

Before considering the possibility of Wittgenstein's later work exhibiting features of agnostic phenomenalism, we need to clarify the notion of 'depth' as it appears in the *Investigations*. Towards the end of Part One, we find this remark:

> In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'. What immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the construction of the sentence, the part of its use—one might say—that can be taken in by the ear.—And now compare the depth grammar, say of the word "to mean", with what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about. (§664)

This seems to cut against two aspects of Wittgenstein's thought. First, his imperative to only describe and not explain language (§109, 126, 654) seems to be undermined by this remark, for what is depth grammar if not an explanation of how two apparently similar locutions have different rules governing their application? Secondly, if I am correct in describing the overall view of *Investigations* as a form of phenomenalism, how can we have a notion like depth grammar? Isn't a world of phenomena *lacking* depth altogether?

A declaration that one seeks to display the depth grammar of a word need not be an explanation. If the Hintikkas' notion of primary and secondary language-games makes sense, it is possible that games involving the same word may overlap. Wittgenstein himself discusses this quite early in *Investigations* (§20.) Such supplanting would be a natural occurrence: sophisticated or specialized games would piggyback upon the lexicon of the older game. They would grow out of the primary games, but as the context changes, so would the applications of language that find fulfillment in the playing of the game. One prominent example would be Wittgenstein's comparisons of 'seeing' and 'seeing under an aspect'. Seeing would have a primary grammar, displayed in locutions like "I see clouds on the horizon", or "Do you see him from where you are?" In the secondary game (aspect seeing), the meaning of see shifts slightly, so that one does not turn one's head upon realizing "I can't see the resemblance to Gaugin's work." Here one could illustrate the depth grammar of 'seeing' by displaying polymorphic language-games using the word.

Wittgenstein's commitment to description as a replacement for explanation in philosophy was profound. As Robin Haack notes, it marks a dissimilarity between the naturalism of the classical pragmatists[6] and the naturalism we find in *Investigations*.[7] Haack identifies three theses of naturalism, as it is found in Hume.[8] Naturalism consists of a commitment to the methods of natural science, a related commitment that the study of human nature must begin with a careful description of the details of that nature, and the third thesis is the rejection of the idea that there is anything approximating First Philosophy. Though he is not clear on the matter, Haack appears by these last two to mean that naturalism is empirical in approach and permits *a posteriori* theoretical claims only. Haack claims that while all three theses apply to the pragmatists, only the last two can be correctly attributed to Wittgenstein.[9] Thus pragmatists explain the phenomena of human life, while Wittgenstein describes it. The view that philosophy can offer more than perspicuous description is a prominent feature of pragmatism, and James does seem to give in to the temptation to give a theory of experience (he did, at times, go out of his way to make radical empiricism seem harmonious with recent developments in physics, for example.) Wittgenstein, on the other hand, returned over and over to a simple point: we should carefully regard the incredible diversity of language we find all around us.

Wittgenstein's eschewing of explanation is given justification in *Investigations*, in numerous places. Perhaps the clearest statement occurs at §97:

> "We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential, in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, proof, truth, experience, and so on. This order is a *super*-order between—so to speak—*super*-concepts. Whereas, of course, if the words "language", "experience", "world", have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words "table", "lamp", "door".

Section 121 is worth including here:

> One might think: if philosophy speaks of the use of the word "philosophy" there must be a second-order philosophy. But it is not so: it is, rather, like the case of orthography, which deals with the word "orthography" among others without then being second-order.

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[6] I use this term to refer to the popular figures of the movement prior to 1925: Peirce, James, Dewey and G. H. Mead.

[7] "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 19 (1982) pp. 163-172.

[8] The temptation to situate Wittgenstein's naturalism in terms of Hume is fairly common. See, *e.g.*, David Pears, "Wittgenstein's Naturalism" *Monist*, 78(4), pp. 411-424. Howard Wettstein paints on a broader canvas in his discussion of Wittgensteinian naturalism. See his "Terra Firma" *ibid.*, pp. 425-446.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 164. However, Haack goes too far in attributing to all pragmatists the claim that "scientific methods are the *only* reliable methods for ascertaining the truth on any subject". This is quite a distortion of James's position. (Haack takes Dewey to be spokesperson for the group. On the differences between Dewey and James regarding naturalism, see Richard Gale, "John Dewey's Naturalization of William James", *The Divided Self of William James*, pp. 335-352.)

Wittgenstein's view was of a language that was already in order in its most mundane manifestations. No deduction or derivation from more sophisticated forms of language would bring order (*ex post facto*) to ordinary locutions. This is one of the themes maintained from the *Tractatus* period, although it takes on a different character once one abandons that other central Tractarian tenet: the idea of language having an essence.

In fact, the emphasis on description gives Wittgenstein's work a very phenomenalistic flavour.[10] As we saw in chapter two (129*ff.*), a phenomenalist picture of the world lacks a 'behind' to which one might point in order to explain the manifest image of phenomena. Wittgenstein views language in a similar manner: it is a domain with extension, but no depth. (This is what Baker and Hacker refer to as "the flatness of philosophical grammar"[11].) Ontologically speaking, 'all propositions are of equal value', (to use the Tractarian phrase.)[12] The point about distinguishing surface from depth grammar thus serves the general move away from explanatory naturalism in favour of descriptive naturalism. Describing deeper grammatical structures re-aligns our purview of language, displaying when conversations shift from one language-game to another.[13] (Consider the shifts in meaning of 'memory' displayed in Edelman's diagram [Figure 1-1, above]). A description can depict grammatical 'overlap' without offering any suggestions about what ought to be considered the cause or ground from which phenomena spring forth. Descriptive naturalism thus compliments phenomenalism by denying the urge to look 'behind' phenomena for their underlying (usually unperceived) causes. If anything is explained by such naturalism, it is our own confusion, not the deeper structure or origin of the manifest world.[14]

Serpentine Grammar

In *Investigations* ontology is a function of grammar, as it was a function of attention and cognitive activity for James. One frequently cited and apropos remark is §371: "*Essence* is expressed by grammar." This remark occurs in a series of remarks discussing the 'arbitrariness' of grammars and rules, and follows a series of questions about mental ontology, particularly mental places or images. There (§365) Wittgenstein wonders whether two characters in a play 'really' play chess, and affirms that they do, for the sense-conditions of the contrary, *pretending* to play chess, are the relevant criteria to consider (and they seem to be absent.) He moves on to discuss psychological concepts, declaring at §370 that questions about the

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[10] As emphatically as Wittgenstein states his position in the early sections of the text, comments found in the later passages put his position into even sharper relief, and the connection with phenomenalism is perspicuous. A series of remarks comparing explanation and description as they relate to his work can be found at §§654-6.
[11] Baker and Hacker, 2:22.
[12] *Tractatus*, 6.4.
[13] This is also an important reason for seeking out diverse examples, as is noted at §122.

ontology of psychological terms like 'imagining' can only be settled by looking at the rules guiding application of the term. At §373 Wittgenstein clarifies his point, "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is." The parenthetical remark which concludes the section, and is supposed to shed light on the whole, is "Theology as grammar". This is an allusion to Martin Luther's claim that 'Theology is the grammar of the word "God"'. It appears that Wittgenstein wishes to extend this idea, making his philosophical investigation a search for the grammatical structures that show us, not just the characteristics of the Almighty, but of all the many things we mention, note, exclaim, in short, discuss.

Does this mean grammar will tell us what the 'essence of the world' is like? Wittgenstein does not claim this. The diversity of language-games, along with the importance he placed on the context of discourse, undermines the view that the world has an essence waiting to be displayed. With the removal of the notion of 'super-concepts' forming the higher structure of language, ontology is something 'undetermined', or so it would seem. We cannot expect to hit upon the set of words that provide a foundation or backbone for other expressions, though there are a great many relations between language-games. (For example, it is not the discovery that 'experience', rather than 'thing' performs the function of describing a metaphysical 'kingdom', within which we search for the proper phyla, orders, genera, *etc*. *Cf*. §121.) In Wittgenstein's view, ontology was expressed by the forms taken by language, and language is not embodied in a lexicographer's table (or a linguist's report). Rather, language is to be understood as a dynamic phenomenon; it is embodied in people who speak it, here and now.[15]

But to move the present performances of language to the foreground risks distorting our view of grammar. Grammatical rules guide our use of language, and we appeal to them to correct errors or teach someone a particular way of speaking. Grammar, while not present in the mind during performance, can be appealed to after the fact, and past schooling in language ensures (for the most part) that our utterances are meaningful. Hacker points to how grammar performs a regulative function, enjoying a kind of 'autonomy' other language lacks: "According to the later philosophy, grammar is autonomous. Far from grammar reflecting the nature of things, what we conceive to be natures or essences are merely the shadows cast by grammar. This conception is diametrically opposed to that of the *Tractatus*."[16] This notion that grammar

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[14] One might naturally wonder where this leaves science, and it should be noted that Wittgenstein's instrumentalism regarding scientific theories is similar to James's (and for that matter, contemporary empiricists like Bas van Fraassen.)

[15] This is a basic theme of the *Tractatus*, rendered pluralistically. This 'revaluation' of the idea of language conveying or displaying the world's form entails that what I discuss below has a very different character than the early work. See *ibid*., 2.023, 6.342.

[16] Hacker, 3:438. Wittgenstein's notion of 'grammar' is a complex one, involving not only ideas about the integration of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, but important comparisons with calculi and games, not to mention mores and values. Baker and Hacker deplore—rightly, I think—Wittgenstein's calling grammatical rules 'arbitrary', and instead defend a description of them as autonomous. They have provided the clearest encapsulation at 2:40: "Grammar is a free-floating array of rules for the use of language. It determines what is a correct use of language, but is not itself correct or incorrect. It is not

leaves its mark (on our conception of the world) as it comes and goes is not unlike James's claim in *Pragmatism* about our interests shaping our picture of the world.[17] Indeed, the 'human serpent' which leaves its trail over everything, might manifest itself in human language. And we might call Wittgenstein's picture of the rules of language telling us what anything is a 'serpentine' picture of grammar.

***Rückblick*: Wittgenstein's attitude in 1920**

As far as Wittgenstein's views in the *Tractatus* are relevant here, we should note two things: the work itself is not an example of agnostic phenomenalism. Rather, it is what we might call the general form of a philosophical theory, meant to be compatible with realism, idealism, neutral forms of phenomenalism, and possibly scepticism and solipsism.[18] Each theory would be the fruit of articulating the meaning of 'object' in the *Tractatus*, in a sense stipulating the domain over which its concepts are to be overlaid.[19] We may augment this claim by noting that it was his decision to complete the Tractarian project by giving an account of 'objects' that led to his flirtation with phenomenalism in 1929. (Thus we have two different aspects at work: formal neutrality regarding objects (in the *Tractatus*) and a particular account of objects that says they are 'phenomena' (in the extension of the Tractarian project in the late 1920s.)) He eventually abandoned the effort to complete the project, deciding that one could not stipulate the basic form of a metaphysical system and then later examine the particulars of the world. He also jettisoned his strong anti-psychologism, recognizing that exploration of how people do use language (particularly psychological language) has a use in dispelling philosophical confusion. (A far more significant development, one that came only after many years of intellectual labour, was the realization that one could not have a hierarchy of words, where certain more fundamental words (*e.g.*, 'being', 'form') would supervene upon local use and make possible an explanation of linguistic experience. (This, of course, vitiates my use of 'linguistic experience' here, but I hope the point is nonetheless clear. In a sense this egalitarianism regarding meaning is a return to "all propositions are of equal value." (6.4))

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answerable to the nature of reality, to the structure of the mind or to 'the laws of thought'. Grammar is autonomous."

[17] *Pragmatism*, p. 47.

[18] Though it is in a sense common to claim a strong open-endedness on this point, I am not sure these last two would be included by Wittgenstein himself: he pointed to certain semantic problems with solipsism (5.62, 5.64), and scepticism would not properly be said to articulate a theory of objects, claiming instead that we do not or cannot know what they are. Since none of these positions can be articulated on the Tractarian view, the point is probably moot.

[19] W. E. Cooper has argued for a similar project on behalf of James, whereby pure experience is understood to play a role in a 'Ramsified' theory of types, forming a larger domain within which mental and physical predicates are applied. See "Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism" *Inquiry* 42(3-4), (1999), 371-383.

Several major features of the *Tractatus* remain, however.[20] The notion of the correct method in philosophy being one which helps an interlocutor re-gestalt a problem persists, but in a less impersonal form.[21] This is the so-called 'therapeutic' view of philosophy. Furthermore, the basic sense that many, if not most philosophical problems are illusory survives, although the increased polymorphism[22] of the *Investigations* means that philosophical confusion takes more forms. Like his early work, Wittgenstein's later thinking give primacy to description, explanation being outside philosophy's ken. The other surviving feature of interest for our purposes is the Fregean notion of 'sense'. Attention to the sense-conditions of language in its pragmatic context is a more-or-less constant feature of Wittgenstein's later writings, as with his earlier work. In the former case, he has simply extended his view from logic to the entirety of human linguistic practice.[23]

Although I believe 'sense-conditions' is a new coinage, the idea is hardly remarkable. As Wittgenstein's thought matured in the late twenties and early thirties, the notion of the sense of a proposition became more 'domestic'. That is to say, he applied the idea of sense to ever more local standards. In stressing the verifiability of propositions, or as James put it, their 'cash value', one may approach this from a point of view that suggests a need for general standards, or a 'logic of inquiry'. One may also distinguish between meaningful and nonsensical language, which was a strategy used in the *Tractatus*.[24] But by the time he dictated the *Blue Book*, Wittgenstein's approach was much more small-scale, concentrating on immanent verification rather than distant, global notions of verifiability. This connects his new method with the older idea that philosophy ought to purge the perplexed of their confusion: many times philosophical confusion will stem from local application of words without clear sense-conditions, when the same words function well elsewhere. As an example of this, Wittgenstein discussed Sir Arthur Eddington's famous description of the 'empty' nature of everyday objects. Much more so than in Edelman's multivalent use of 'memory' discussed in chapter one, here we may see an attempt at explaining something giving rise to very unclear and problematic language-use. Of the notion that the floor beneath him 'isn't really solid', Wittgenstein remarked:

> This is liable to perplex us, for in a way of course we know that the floor is solid, or that, if it isn't solid, this may be due to the wood being rotten but not to its being composed of electrons. To say, on this latter ground, that the floor is not solid is to misuse language. For even if the particles were as big as grains of sand, and as close together as these are in a sandheap, the floor would not be solid if it were composed of them in the sense in

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[20] For an overview of the relation between the *Tractatus* and *Investigations*, see Norman Malcolm, *Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of his Early Thought* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
[21] Baker and Hacker elegantly display this shift in their section titles: they offer an *Übersicht* (overview), the counterpart of the Tractarian picture, in conjunction with an *Umsicht* (a look around), a more *Investigations*-like device.
[22] I borrow this term from Gellner, *Words and Things*.
[23] Formal logic has to a large degree emulated this broadening of scope. See Susan Haack's account in *Philosophy of Logics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978).
[24] The distinction between 'senseless' and 'nonsensical' propositions need not concern us here.

> which a sand-heap is composed of grains. Our perplexity was based on a mis-understanding; the picture of the thinly filled space had been wrongly *applied*. For this picture of the structure of matter was meant to explain the very phenomenon of solidity. As in this example the word "solidity" was used wrongly and it seemed that we had shown that nothing really was solid, just in this way in stating our puzzles about the *general vagueness* of sense-experience, and about the flux of all phenomena, we are using the words "flux" and "vagueness" wrongly, in a typically metaphysical way, namely without an antithesis; whereas in their correct and everyday use vagueness is opposed to clearness, flux to stability, inaccuracy to accuracy, and *problem* to *solution*. The very word "problem", one might say, is misapplied when used for our philosophical troubles. These difficulties, as long as they are seen as problems, are tantalizing and appear insoluble. (BB, pp. 45-6)

Here we can see Wittgenstein's pragmatic emphasis on verification, which must be local rather than programmatically general. The need for an antithetical use, an opposite possibility for an assertion to 'push against' is central, and we see this throughout the discussions of psychological language in *Investigations*. For thought to occur without speech we must be able to have speech without thought; reading silently must be comparable to reading out loud; if sensations are distinct from objects there must be a concrete way in which we can distinguish them (we must be able to talk about sensations lacking objects and objects not giving rise to sensations), and so on. It is the local or 'concrete' application of sense-conditions that gives one the strongest sense that Wittgenstein is engaged in pragmatism (whatever his protests against the Weltanschauung he thought it represented). It is also the method that exposes some of James's deficiencies, for Wittgenstein shows how his application of the picture of a feeling accompanying the search for a name, or of mental life as an 'experience', takes these words out of their normal environment. The words then become categories for the whole of reality, and we can be stuck with situations where locutions involving these terms seems strange. (*E.g.*, my intention to go to the library must have a dim feeling associated with it, *somewhere*, even when I'm not aware of my intention. Likewise, calling my perception of a pen an 'experience' is a strange new use, for experience[25] usually denotes something remarkable in one's existence.)

Sense-conditions are an integral part of Wittgenstein's philosophical attitude and his method, and his particular, immanent approach[26] signals problems for any view which prioritizes one part of language over another (the rejection of this prioritizing view leads to embracing 'the flatness of philosophical grammar', discussed above.) In addition, this attitude motivated Wittgenstein to engage in a similar sort of search as found in James's later writings: the search for a way of characterizing the phenomena of the present moment, and building out of this a perspicuous account—one that has the immediacy or personal

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[25] Experience also refers to learning, memory and abilities, but here too we have potential problems, for it is indeed odd to say I have *experience* with writing utensils, or with perceiving my immediate surroundings.

[26] Goodman also imputes an immanent approach to both thinkers, arguing that apropos Wittgenstein, "this movement against what lies hidden and towards that which lies in plain view…is equally characteristic of James." ("What Wittgenstein Learned from William James", p. 349.)

perspective the solipsist values—of the world as a whole. Thus the search for the sense-conditions leads one to consider phenomenalism.

Wittgenstein's renewal of philosophical work in 1929 shows him exploring a phenomenalist theory of perception, in his attempt to complete the project of the *Tractatus* by specifying the objects to which elementary propositions refer. His ambivalence regarding the early fruits of this effort is seen in his writing and conversations with Waismann, and his dismissal of these ideas in "Some Remarks on Logical Form." Rush Rhees describes the shift in Wittgenstein's thinking during his return to Cambridge:

> When he was discussing the incompatibilities of colour statements, Wittgenstein wanted 'a purely phenomenological theory of colour' which would include nothing 'hypothetical' like references to light waves or to the physiology of the retina: colours as they are given in 'immediate experience'. And he suggested that we might have a 'phenomenological language' which would take in also the phenomena of visual space, of sounds, and so on: 'an account free of everything hypothetical'—which meant not only references to physics or physiology, but also any reference to the future or the past.... (*Discussions of Wittgenstein*, pp. 20)

It is significant for our purposes to note that Wittgenstein's work at this point exhibited a modification of the classical model in favour of a 'sliding-peg' variety where there is no particular self to which phenomena are tied. This can be seen as an attempt to overcome the solipsism (or, if you like, monadism) inherent in classical phenomenalism.[27] It can also be seen as a recurrence of James's elimination of the self from psychology, a move that enabled James to construct a similar version of phenomenalism in his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. For James at that time, the overcoming of solipsism was a major goal.

In revising his position in the early thirties, Wittgenstein criticizes his earlier phenomenalism, and this criticism is of a pragmatic nature. We do not refer to our sensations typically; our language is 'object oriented' in such a way that a literal construal of phenomenalism seems unnatural and unworkable.[28] This is a rejection of classical pragmatism, in favour of a more pragmatic point of view (as discussed in chapter two, agnostic phenomenalism can work with pragmatism harmoniously). Another thread of this pragmatism was a move toward pluralism: Wittgenstein recognized that the purposes of language are many and varied, and no one theory of the relation of words to sensory cues, objects, or concepts will survive a close examination of the diversity of language-use found in ordinary life. Philosophical confusion occurs because of an enduring tendency to generalize and oversimplify, and because in philosophical questioning we attempt to detach words from their practical contexts and ossify them. I will argue below that we may see this development of Wittgenstein's views, which arguably find their mature (if not final) expression in

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[27] This is also where solipsism reveals its tautological potential. If we adopt a sliding-peg approach to the question of what is perceived, we get the following type of avowal: "All the things that are perceived is the sum-total of perceptions." By pointing to 'everything in the world', we do affect to give an account identical with pure realism. This is also why the Ego must not be identified with any thing in the world.

what we now know as the *Investigations*, as a realization of the radical empiricist project proposed by James. On the view I propose, James's own sketch of a theory describing the phenomenon of reflective awareness is flawed in its generality. Particularly, James's yielding to the temptation to gather all psychological phenomena under the same ontological roof goes against some of his own psychological observations, and his unclarities about the relation of mental concepts and the concepts of physical sciences are subject to penetrating criticism.

Phenomenalism as looking for a membrane; as neutrality

> §276: "But don't we at least *mean* something quite definite when we look at a colour and name our colour-impression?" It is as if we detached the colour-*impression* from the object, like a membrane. (This ought to arouse our suspicions.)

Wittgenstein came to realize around 1936 that phenomenalism was not going to solve his worries about meaning and knowledge. The problem of other minds remains relatively untouched by phenomenalism, and even his 'sliding-peg' variation was not without difficulties. Wittgenstein understood that phenomenalism can look like an attempt to replace ordinary speech or, like any other metaphysical theory, an attempt to entrench a distinction between appearance and reality. This last point is devastating for phenomenalism in its classical mode. Phenomenalism is usually motivated by a desire to eliminate the division between appearance and reality, pointing to how perceptions 'hang together' in a way illusions, misperceptions, hallucinations, *etc*., do not. The aim is to eliminate talk of unperceivables, replacing them with an account of hypothesis formation or abbreviation. Sets of sense data are referred to by our object language, and the meanings of names are understood in terms of possible perceptual experiences.

This view of meaning did not sit well with Wittgenstein's pragmatic inclinations. Looking at a linguistic exchange *in situ*, it is easy to see that sensory experience is not the center of attention. Anticipation of private sensations, internally related to my unique point of view, might not even be thought of at all. This goal (isolating what is private and unique in one's perceptions) seems to be acquired primarily by philosophers looking at an older, material language game in a new light. Experiences of doubt and confusion over the grammar of perceptual language-games (in their own diversity, and compared with other functions of language such as expressing pain) give rise to the misleading thought that our sensations can be detached from the object like a membrane. In an original or everyday situation (*e.g*., instructing someone on when a pie is ready to be removed from the oven), sensory experiences are neither private nor taken as distinct from the object (the pie) of which they inform us. Applying the empirical sentiment that usually accompanies phenomenalism, Wittgenstein notes that talk of consciousness or an inner theatre wherein sensations get manipulated is absent at this level. We construct the idea that there is something

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[28] This was Ayer's conclusion as well. See Ayer, "Phenomenalism" in *Philosophical Essays* (1954).

non-physical, private and 'diaphanous' that forms the medium through which we come to know the world and others, and we construct our philosophical confusion along with this picture.[29]

In addition to this empiricist sentiment, Wittgenstein's pluralism was one way of dealing with this picture of perception: by breaking down a supposedly homogenous field of language into a hodgepodge of overlapping and interrelated language games, Wittgenstein removes from our view the notion that there ought to be a single explanation of the problem of perception. The mind no longer appears to be something of which we have such a perspicuous view: the concept 'mental' manifests itself in ways more subtle than most philosophers anticipate. Furthermore, on Wittgenstein's view, the mental is not non-physical or ethereal. That arises from the twin errors of assuming it must have a nature opposite to physical nature and yet imagining that nature via physicalist metaphors or pictures. (§§426-7) Small wonder we are confused.

The question of Wittgenstein's commitment to familiar metaphysical positions is a recurring one. Like James, his tendency to search for a *tertium quid*, a position arising from opposing viewpoints and incorporating new ideas into the synthesis makes his position appear initially ambiguous and tantalizingly close to familiar doctrines. It is tempting to regard the abandonment of search for a 'primary language' as a rejection of phenomenalism *tout court*, and from that it is a short step to seeing the *Investigations* as, if not an avowal of realism, at least a work that exudes, or depends on the truth that realism seek to convey. Popular sections of the work, such as the so-called 'private language argument' are held up as 'sceptical solutions' to traditional solipsistic and skeptical doubts.[30] One might argue that, given what Wittgenstein has to say about the traditional metaphysical options (*i.e.*, that they all amount to the same form of nonsense) it would be very surprising indeed if Wittgenstein could be shown to embrace one position within this set of options. Something different must be found before we can attribute a metaphysical *Weltanschauung*, however idiosyncratic, to Wittgenstein. But there is a deeper point about Wittgenstein's emphasis on the practical and intersubjective nature of language that must be untangled, if the attribution of agnostic phenomenalism to him is to survive.

Contemporary scholars are tempted to see in the intersubjectivity of language a tacit commitment to physicalism. This is supported by the abandonment of the earlier versions of phenomenalism and Wittgenstein's later work centered around the physiognomic aspects of mental states such as emotion. As previously noted, Hintikka and Hintikka assume that because primary language-games use what an observer (philosopher or otherwise) would identify as 'physical objects' these games are thereby physical,

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[29] Although this picture is attacked in various ways throughout the text, the most straightforward criticisms of classical phenomenalism occur quite early in the text, around §47*ff*., where Wittgenstein deconstructs the idea that a visual scene admits of a single analysis. (This material echoes a line of thought from the 'Big Typescript' that remains untranslated. The title of the chapter is 'Phäenomenologie', and begins by considering the claim that gives some clue to Wittgenstein's shifting terminology in the mid-thirties: 'Phäenomenologie ist Grammatik' (TS 213, §94).)

or express a commitment to physicalism. But a conversation communicating an emotion, or reporting one's recognition of such a state in others, can be quite mute on this issue. We might consider as an example a typical conversation:

> "Was your daughter pleased when you told her she was getting a pony?"
> "She was ecstatic! We've made her very happy."
> "Is it a good animal?"
> "Yes. He has a lot of energy; he's playful, but he's not too willful, so he will suit a young rider."

Such language does not deal with the physicality of the persons and animals mentioned. Rather, the topics of conversation include a girl's emotional reaction, and the qualities of a pony, relative to a set of needs. Even a purely physiological discussion about the pony will often remain at the level of aspects seen (*e.g.*, pointing to a sign of good muscle-tone) and this, like seeing the stability in a building[31], is a conversation which may take for granted the underlying material that constitutes a sign such as muscle-tone, but insofar as the attention of the interlocutors is on that sign (as long as the aspect serving as a criterion for muscle-tone is the center of their attention) the physical nature of the scene is not at issue.

One can say a commitment to physicalism is expressed by their conversation, but this would require a secondary language game, one that (from the participants' perspective, at least) regards seeing formerly mental (non-physical) entities as 'embodied' in their particular physiognomic arrangements in physical bodies. Is there anything wrong with such a move? As a stipulation, or superimposition upon the original conversation, there is nothing preventing such a decision. But to what end is such a move made? If the intent is to apply this interpretation across all linguistic practice, we might question the function of such a move. As a latecomer to the scene, it is hard to see how such an ontology-game settles our doubts. It may give rise to new doubts (*e.g.*, do the interlocutors have to *know* they are referring to physical entities, and if so does such knowledge necessarily precede meaningful speech?) This secondary game seems like a game applied to mirages and afterimages, given free reign over all discourse. The new 'ontology-game', arising from specialized contexts where we are uncertain if what we are seeing is real, seems to be a prime example of philosophers taking a certain game and attempting to spread it out over the rest of language.

Wittgenstein's neutrality on this issue was indeed a move that superceded his search for a primary (phenomenal) language, but Hintikka and Hintikka mistake this increasing neutrality for an increasing commitment to a physicalist picture (indeed, they conflate physicalism with ontological neutrality.) Such a

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[30] *Loc. classicus*: Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).
[31] Wittgenstein's example from §421, discussed in chapter three, above.

move towards ontological agnosticism was not unique to Wittgenstein. Russell made a similar move from sense-data phenomenalism to neutral monism by 1921.[32]

A Radical Critic of Empiricism: How can Wittgenstein be said to have an 'empiricism'?

Part of the problem of saying that Wittgenstein adhered to a form of empiricism stems from the fact that empiricism forms one of the targets of his critical remarks. This is made even more confusing by the manner in which he used James as a representative of introspectionist psychology and imagistic empiricism regarding the mind[33]. Two philosophical positions are routinely criticized in *Investigations*, transcendent realism and imagistic (or mentalistic) empiricism.[34] As understood therein, Wittgenstein cannot be said to embrace empiricism any more than he can embrace realism.

Although there have been several attempts to portray Wittgenstein as a Humean empiricist, the most recent being John Cook's account, Wittgenstein's holism entails that the comparison with Hume is a poor fit.[35] Other commentators (such as Baker and Hacker) have pointed to Locke and even Hobbes as familiar authors who exemplify positions Wittgenstein critiqued. Other alternatives, including scrutiny of Jamesian empiricism, are seldom explored in detail. Part of the problem lies in the hasty inference that Wittgenstein abandoned phenomenalism altogether and must therefore be something other than a Berkelean empiricist, which I have discussed above. Lack of familiarity with James's complete position would be a likely contributing factor: many commentators cite him when discussing the pitfalls of introspectionism, but few consider his philosophical views to be sufficiently distinct from the empiricist tradition to warrant close inspection. But James's empiricism was very different from his British forerunners: his radical empiricism was more rationalistic that Locke's, more realistic than Berkeley's, more holistic than Hume's. It is striking that given the common knowledge that Wittgenstein was navigating between received philosophical doctrines, James's similarly-styled variations should have escaped notice.

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[32] See Michael Lockwood, "What *Was* Russell's Neutral Monism?", *in Midwest Studies in Philosophy VI (1981): The Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, Peter French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein, eds. (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1981), pp. 143-158.

[33] Recall James was a collateral target regarding the 'ideo-motor' theory of volition, and an overt target for his comments on the role of imagery in memory and language-use. See chapter three, above, p. 125.

[34] Note that there is a associated criticism of the psychological positions of behaviourism and introspection.

[35] John W. Cook, *Wittgenstein's Metaphysics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.) As noted previously, David Pears is also among those who see fruitful similarities between Hume and Wittgenstein. Cook is noteworthy because he imputes to Wittgenstein a view useful for my thesis. He claims Wittgenstein held a metaphysical view—neutral monism—which was a frequent concomitant of the empiricism of Wittgenstein's day. He cites as possible inspirations for this Russell's *Analysis of Mind* [1921], and Karl Pearson's *The Grammar of Science* [1892]. There are problems with this line of influence, as Wittgenstein is not known to have taken Russell's post-WWI work very seriously, and there is little evidence that he studied Pearson's book. Cook does, however, give James a minor supporting role in this tale.

Despite Wittgenstein's 'criticisms' of James considered in the previous chapter, one may look at the later Wittgenstein and see a great deal of similarity with James. In addition to a basic approach that stressed the local use of expressions, they appear to share the same attitude toward philosophy. Both were looking for a *tertium quid*, a way of navigating between the current theories on offer, avoiding the tendency to hypostacize lived experience and instead account for life 'on the wing', and most importantly, both sought in an important sense a resolution to the debates of philosophy.[36] The main differences lie in the particulars of their approaches, and the relation of philosophical clarification to scientific research. James's solution was psychological (yielding pluralism via an account of pure experience emerging through time); Wittgenstein's was linguistic (thus his pluralism functioned at a different level, *viz.*, primary language games), while James's pluralism was typically applied to perception and thus less overtly intersubjective. Wittgenstein's critique of Jamsian phenomenalism[37], and his imagistic psychology is based on a grammatical point (*viz.*, that James loosens the grammar of mentalistic language to the point of vacuity), and in effect replaces both introspective and behaviouristic psychologies with a more naturalistic picture, *i.e.*, one more coherent with the natural grammars of primary languages. The effect of this is a more perspicuous laying out of the relation between the members of our vast collection of language games. James saw his clarifications as contributions to a science of the mind, while Wittgenstein not only stipulated that philosophy must not explain (§124*ff.*), but he thought confusions in psychology highlighted by his method were epiphenomenal, and philosophy made little real contribution to scientific research.

Toying with phenomenalism (and among other things, with the idea that the propositions of physics must find verification in phenomenal experience 'in however circuitous a manner' (*Philosophical Grammar*, p. 223)) led to a reaction on Wittgenstein's part that had reasons both external and internal to his thought. Among the external reasons was the popularity of his views within the Vienna Circle, whose positivism and progressivism Wittgenstein deplored. Internal to his own thought, wrestling with a way of isolating a 'phenomenological language' was beset with neighboring problems concerning the location of private experiences, their relation to their objects and the viewer, and most importantly the problem of other minds. His experimentation with sense data theories during this period can lead to the impression that the phenomenalist picture was anathema to him after 1930. Certainly, as I have indicated, Hintikka and Hintikka are of this opinion: they believe the later writings are typified by a *replacement* of the search for a phenomenological language with a search for a physicalist one[38]. This really isn't much of a search, as the existing, intersubjective language of everyday is the language in question. I would argue that the search for a personal language of private experience is indeed dropped, but this does not result in a form of physicalist

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[36] In the terminology I have been using throughout this essay, I am suggesting Wittgenstein shared James's pragmatism, pluralism, naturalism, immanentism and his therapeutic view of philosophy. I have not discussed holism or indeterminism, but these can be seen in *Investigations* as well.
[37] Since, as I have argued, Wittgenstein significantly misunderstood James's version of phenomenalism, we might use Cooper's term 'sensationalism' in this context. See Cooper [forthcoming], chapter one.
[38] See Hintikka and Hintikka, p. 146.

semantics, for the simple reason that no 'primary' language can have the ontological character they ascribe to it.[39] Likewise, Wittgenstein's calling attention to mundane language-games is not an avowal of realism, which he saw as tangled with its enemy, solipsism. By the mid-1930s things were somewhat ambiguous for Wittgenstein's research. There can be no language for creating a perspicuous presentation of one's experience of the present moment, nor is there a coherent notion of an essence of language to serve as a guiding ideal in such a project; what remains after this has been understood is an open question.

Wittgenstein's declaration to 'look and see' (§66) what language does (in concrete application) is the best-known aspect of his emergent empiricism. His return to philosophical activity was marked by a turn towards concrete analyses of the many uses of language. His shift in terminology, from calculi and systems to talk of games and contexts, reflects not only a growing awareness of the heteronomy of language, but of the importance of studying content rather than form. (This was stated as early as "Some Remarks on Logical Form" (1929))[40] Likewise his rejection of his early anti-psychologism is symptomatic of such a turn: the attention he paid in his later work to the variety and nuance of psychological expressions and descriptions shows an empirical 'attitude' quite contrary to the confident rationalism of the *Tractatus* research, where the exact nature of 'objects' was left as a problem for subsequent researchers. (Much of Wittgenstein's new approach to philosophy was empiricist in spirit, *e.g.*, his attitude towards the *a priori* in philosophical research.)

Certainly, Wittgenstein wouldn't have agreed with classical empiricists that there is a 'given', such as raw sensation, which serves as an objective basis for our subjective mixing and matching of impressions. Much of what we encounter in a given moment is 'figured' or appears under an interpretation, which we can become aware of having learnt, and perhaps learn to alter. But for the most part, after a certain kind of training, one cannot help seeing as the letter F.

But regarding the possibility of Wittgenstein's empiricism, perhaps the greatest stumbling block is the existence of a detailed critique of empiricism in *Investigations*, the very material dealing with James's psychology. As detailed in the preceding chapter, Wittgenstein was critical of Jamsian treatments of psychological genera (volition, emotion, intention, *etc.*) and methodology (introspective and behavioural 'explanations' which conflated symptoms with explananda, and which ran roughshod over natural grammar.) However, I have tried to show that James's true position was more flexible and robust than Wittgenstein seems to have realized, and that Jamesian psychology is not prone to all the errors Wittgenstein imputes.

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[39] This is one of the Hintikkas' own theses (see their chapter 11), though they do not address the point above. In an uncharitable moment (p. 275-6) they argue that Wittgenstein's theory would be *more* physicalistic if he hadn't his Tolstoyan moral views, which (they hint) skewed his results in favour of the everyday and hence the subjective. See above, p. 132.

[40] Quoted below, p. 149.

If the intent of Wittgenstein's criticisms of psychology was to rid it of its dogmatic character (this character would be revealed, *e.g.*, in an optimism that future research could solve current quandaries, that a methodological or conceptual breakthrough would realize psychology's scientific potential), then his contribution would have been welcomed by James. For James (as has been previously shown) devoted much of his *Principles* to criticizing dogmatic views, in favour of a more open and varied approach to psychological questions. He too thought a 'full blown' psychological investigation would include philosophical demystification of various concepts (*Principles*, preface, p. 6), though he did not give full reign to this impulse in *Principles*.

'Sie hat nicht echte Dauer'

An important innovation of Wittgenstein's involves his comparison of various psychological processes as they manifest a quality he called 'genuine duration' (*echte Dauer*). Wittgenstein found that verbs like 'intend', 'expect' and 'remember' do not have the same continuous qualities as pains, afterimages, or the attending to objects outside ourselves. While they do not have true or genuine temporal dimensions, they are not timeless; rather, they have a different sense of time bound up with them. This difference manifests itself in comparative 'speech experiments' that Wittgenstein constructed with great frequency. His notebooks are full of attempts to perspicuously display the grammatical differences between pain-states and sensations, on the one hand, and meaning, recollecting and hoping on the other.[41] Genuine duration was at one time intended to mark of a genus of psychological concepts or processes. This concept cuts across familiar divisions in philosophy of mind, as, for example, pains and calculating inwardly are separated from playing a game of chess or disliking tomatoes. Some functions, such as remembering, seem to straddle the divide.

Norman Malcolm gives a summary of some of the regions in language where genuine duration applies.[42] According to him we may apply the notion to physical processes and changes, psychological phenomena such as sensation, warmth and coldness, dizziness and pain. Any state where it makes sense to ask the subject 'how long has it been happening?' is a state with genuine duration. Malcolm notes that the connections between the states with genuine duration and cognitive concepts like knowledge and belief are not uniform, thus we cannot use the concept of genuine duration to mark a division in the mental world. In cases where genuine duration does not 'fit', we have states that manifest themselves over time (hoping is

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[41] *N.B.*: Wittgenstein's phrase 'genuine duration' (*echte Dauer*) appears throughout the *Nachlaß*, particularly in the later entries. My examples are culled from the instances in *Zettel*, specifically §45-7; §82; §§482-491. The last group contains mention of James on the issue of the inadequacy of psychological terms; a marginal note inserted by Wittgenstein into *Investigations*, Part One (p. 59), contains similar material.

not a momentary phenomenon, for example) but do not partake of the 'continuous happening' game; nor do they admit of moment-to-moment observation or reporting, though states like hope do have signs (symptoms or criteria) we can observe. A further complication is the possibility of overlapping games with the same words: as Malcolm notes, one may describe moments where one feels "a surge of hope", for example, as when a shipwrecked sailor is suddenly alerted to the possibility of rescue. In our more frequent use of 'hope', we do not have genuine duration, but something that seems more ephemeral.

But of course states like hope are *not* ephemeral, they simply rely on a different grammar of time and the connected notions of persistence and change. But like James's discussion of sensation, where something akin to perception is isolated in our awareness, and strange new relations come into view, we here have a case of psychological states which we carry around with us, but do not experience in the way that we experience a pain, a buzzing in the ears, or a burst of joy. To borrow two similes from a related discussion in *Investigations*, we might note that a man can travel by himself, and still be accompanied by someone's good wishes; likewise an empty room can still be 'full of light.'[43] We will return to the notion of genuine duration as we complete Wittgenstein's picture of the grammar of psychological concepts. Prior to that, a return to James's model will be of use.

A Tour of Pure Experience

James's articulation of his radical empiricism, as we find it in the articles from 1904-5, involves a depiction of the subjective and objective 'fields' emerging from a common experience or event.[44] These fields change over time, and what begins as an undifferentiated mass becomes a region with 'emphases'. These elements or parts form relations with one another (new experience is assumed to add to the mix as time passes) "so that experience now flows as if shot through with adjectives and nouns and prepositions and conjunctions." The 'purity' of experience is understood in a relative sense, "meaning the proportional amount of unverbalized sensation which it still embodies."[45]

Such discussions sound like James is imagining the universe remaking itself with every passing moment. However, this was really a thought-experiment designed to simplify his model for initial discussion. In "The Thing and Its Relations" James notes the flux exhibits both continuity and separation. This is an important commitment: James does not want a uniform backbone to experience, nor can his picture tolerate

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[42] N. Malcolm and D. M. Armstrong *Consciousness and Causality*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 81. *Cf.* Hacker's discussion at 4:419*ff*.
[43] These occur at §673, where the topic is whether mental attitudes literally accompany the uttering of a sentence, a most relevant issue for our discussion.
[44] Talk of fields was common in James's early formulation of the idea (in 1895-6), but he settled on 'experience' by 1904-5. See his *Manuscript Lectures*. David Lamberth's account in *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) pp. 87*ff*. is useful.
[45] "The Thing and Its Relations" (ERE, p. 46)

total separation of its elements. But his overall aims aside, here in his attempt to portray pure experience, James picks the hypothetical encounter with a pen as the starting point for his story.

We might look, then, at James's pure experience account of a pen. He stipulates that in this hypothesis, neither the pen nor the person who views it have a history. The original field of viewing the pen is therefore ontologically neutral, for "[t]o get classed either as a physical pen or as some one's percept of a pen, it must assume a *function*, and that can only happen in a more complicated world." (ERE, p. 61.) Thus James explains the emergence of the physical pen as a function of successive, contiguous pen-experiences.

> "[W]hen we call an experience 'conscious,' that does not mean that it is suffused throughout with a peculiar modality of being ('psychic' being) as stained glass may be suffused with light, but rather that it stands in certain determinate relations to other portions of experience extraneous to itself. These form one peculiar 'context' for it; while taken in another context of experiences, we class it as a fact in the physical world." (*Ibid.*)

Once again, James insists on cashing out ontological distinctions in terms of functional relations. If we take the initial experience of the pen as given, its neutrality regarding the mental and the physical is simply follows *ex hypothesi*. And so we find James treating the matter:

> "Continue, if you please, to speak of the pure unit as 'the pen.' So far as the pen's successors do but repeat the pen or, being different from it, are 'energetically' related to it, it and they will form a group of stably existing physical things. So far, however, as its successors differ from it in another well-determined way, the pen will figure in their context, not as a physical, but as a mental fact. It will become a passing 'percept,' *my* percept of the pen." (*ibid.* pp. 63-64)

James goes on to explicitly link this analysis with that given of the self in *Principles*, chapter X. According to his analysis of the development of functional relationships between experiences, a simple event gets 'taken up' in one way or another over time, as new relations are experienced (this may be a passive phenomenon in some cases, in others we appear to direct attention, and this shapes experience as well). To continue using James's example, the pen may become part of a 'field' of objective experience, or it may develop relations with the subjective aspects of the stream of thought of the observer. Thus we may depict the pure experience of the pen, as potentially evolving in two different domains, thusly:

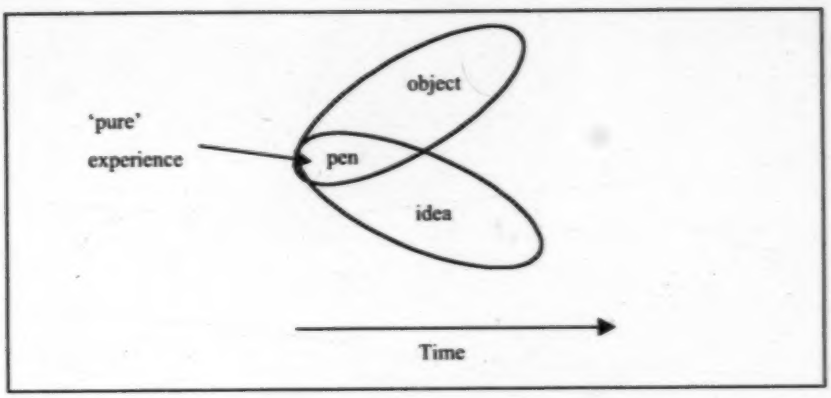

Figure 4-1: James's pen, taken twice over

James is postulating a hypothetically pure experience, with no history of either the pen or the thinker prior to their intersection. This is simply for ease of presentation, James freely admitted things were much more complicated in the world of actual experience. Working with this diagram for the time being, we may be tempted to insert a horizontal line through the centre of this diagram, demarcating the 'outer' from the 'inner'. Thus the pure experience is something that straddles this line, and as the experiential fields are developed, the experience moves away from ontological 'no man's land' and acquires an increased character of objectivity or subjectivity, as shown in figure 4-2:

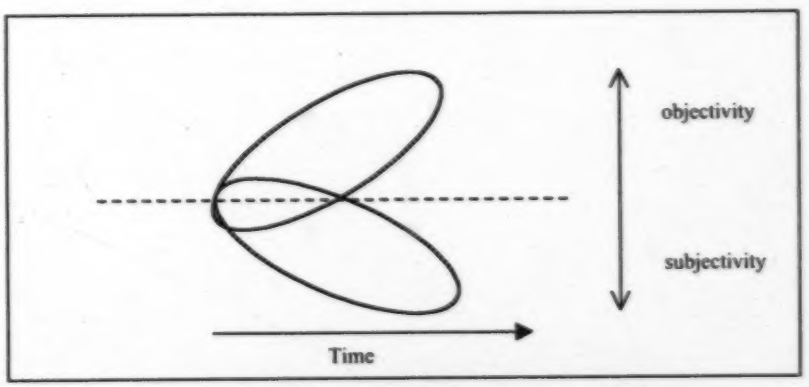

Figure 4-2: The emergence of 'inner' and 'outer' worlds

This model is considerably complicated when we consider matters beyond the simple 'inner/outer' distinction. For example, James used this picture to address the matter of solipsism. He believe that the problem of other minds could be circumvented by simply pointing out that one experience can not only figure both as a physical event and a psychological one, but in fact several 'psychic' fields may emerge

from a common experience, or, as is more likely given the nature of our lives, they may overlap. We may depict this by adding another dimension to our diagram:

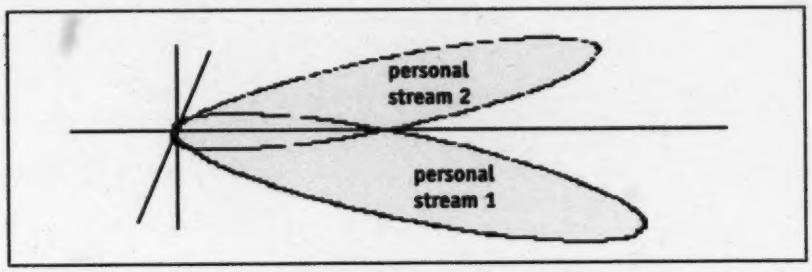

Figure 4-3: Pure experience and other minds

Here we have yet to include our physical object, which may be portrayed as a third field, having height to distinguish it from the two overlapping psychic fields. Alternatively, we may represent time as radial, extending outward from the germinal experience.

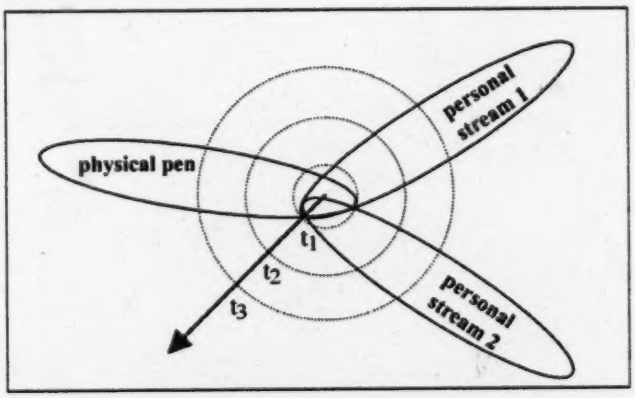

Figure 4-4: Radial re-rendering of 4-3

This [figure 4-4] would be a more accurate representation of James's non-dualist vision: we have no absolute difference marking a physical pen off from its two psychic counterparts, only differing collections of relations, extending or developing in unique ways over time. James used similar diagrams in his notes to try an explore his options.[46] In his rendering, both the physical pen field, and the personal field containing the thought of the pen were drawn parabolically, indicating an indeterminate development beyond the period represented in the diagram. Starting with the assumption that one experience can enter into

countless relations, James has no great difficulty accommodating other minds: we can share an experience, cognizing it from different perspectives (and with differing interests) to be sure, but we can both have the same thing 'in our minds' and then go our separate ways.

This picture needs a great deal of refinement, however. To begin with, what are the contents of these fields? James did not think the pure experience was a uniform region of experiential space. Rather, it came replete with possibilities. In one of the less passive characterizations of pure experience, "The Place of Affectional Facts in a World of Pure Experience", James claims that "the central point of the pure-experience theory is that 'outer' and 'inner' are names for two groups into which we sort experiences according to the way in which they act upon their neighbors." (ERE, 70) Pure experiences, then, have primitive differences which we can pull out of them by selective attention and categorization. James stressed that classifications "depend on our temporary purposes" (*ibid.*, 71) and thus even a distinction apparently as absolute as subjective/objective can shift its boundaries with our changing interests.[47] Regarding 'affectional experiences', James argued "we have no permanent and steadfast purpose that obliges us to be consistent, so we find it easy to let them float ambiguously, sometimes classing them with our feelings, sometimes with more physical realities, according to caprice or to the convenience of the moment." This is a point we have already explored briefly in the argument of "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" (James's last point (about caprice) appears to be a rhetorical exaggeration. Certainly he goes on to analyze emotions in a way that makes them seem far less a matter of whimsical categorization.)

In this essay James lingers over the cases of ambiguity, or situations where affects retain the equivocal nature they possessed in their first, 'pure' moments of existence. Like the notion of primary and secondary qualities, we may decide that we wish to categorize these phenomena in a certain way. So, an experience of fear (triggered, say, by a dim sense that one heard footsteps behind one a moment ago) might be quickly classified as a ridiculous, irrational response, or as a concomitant to real danger, depending on the connections made in subsequent moments. Moreover, such a feeling might retain its equivocal quality for some duration, remaining an *ambiguous fear*, for as long as one is uncertain whether there really *is* someone lurking around a corner.[48]

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[46] *Manuscript Essays and Notes*, p. 68; p. 178.

[47] To be precise, a pure experience is one without any relations to anything else (yet). Therefore it has no qualities as James understood the term, for he considered qualities to be a species of relation. By the 'pure experience part of the field', I was referring to the space equivocal between the two subsequent, ontologically distinct, fields. This field may be said to have various contents, such as a visual background, movement, feelings of interest or heightening awareness, *etc.* But the greater the 'purity' of such a region, the cloudier the distinctions between its contents. Several commentators have noted this point: see Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Chaos and Context*, chapter three, and David Lamberth, *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience*, chapter one.

[48] Fear was a favourite example for James, as it showed the local ambiguity belying philosopher's confident distinction between corporeal phenomena and things that are 'only in one's mind'.

As our diagrams indicate, experiences can overlap with one another, taking parts of earlier experiences and connecting them up with new ones. In the case of concept-using beings like ourselves, this development can take on an enormous variety of complex forms. Returning to the 'momentary pen' as the 'origin' of our experiential fields, we might explore how conceptual and perceptual experiences manifest themselves. (See Figure 4-5.)

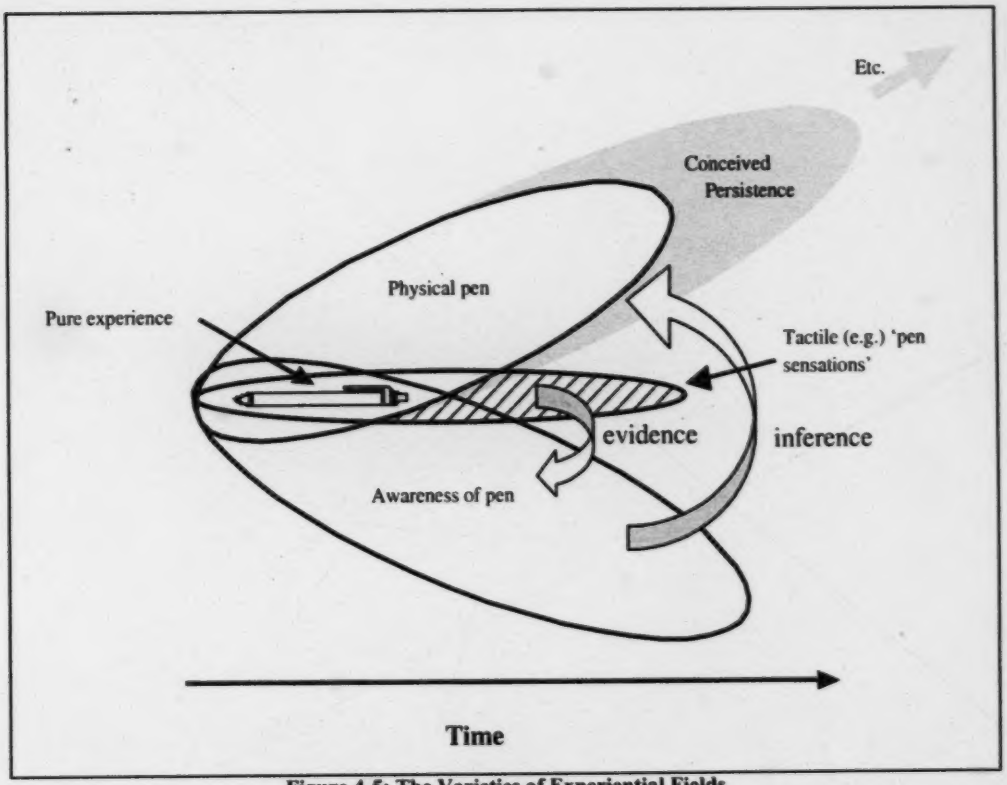

Figure 4-5: The Varieties of Experiential Fields

Conceived existence (persistence would perhaps be more accurate) is portrayed here as a kind of projected shadow, extending indefinitely into the future. Conception is an activity of the mind, in this case taking as its object the complex of an entity (the physical pen) and a spatiotemporal domain we call the physical world. Unless we have reason to think otherwise, we conceive of the pen as remaining on the scene, its location not firmly conceived as any particular place, its persistence not for any specific length of time. It is a functional relation between current perceptions and expectations of future events. When home alone, we expect our pen to be perceptible when we return to it, and we would be surprised by any great change in its character, including its location. Just as we conceive of a stable, physical backdrop for our perception of

the pen, we integrate our current thoughts of it into a larger conceptual 'scene' of our mental life. Thus our mental field has a conceptual shadow or backdrop (not pictured in our diagram) which would be composed of memories and abilities which situate our present knowledge of the pen. Knowledge of the pen's constitution, cost, ownership, *etc.*, would all form part of this complex backdrop, from which new thoughts may emerge.

From our perceptual scene we may isolate certain aspects by discriminative activity, which also involves conception. For example, we may isolate our tactile sensations from the pen and from our larger awareness of the present moment. Such sensations are distinct from memories of a long-lost fountain pen, and from our auditory sensations, and even from the tactile and kinaesthetic sensations of being seated while one feels the pen. Yet these may all be related to one another, forming a stream of thought, if one is introspectively inclined at a given moment. The tactile sensations occupy an ambiguous location in our diagram, and indeed, such sensa are not objects of thought in the way imagined sensations, or concepts would be (they are certainly less subservient to one's will), but insofar as they are linked to the body, they cannot be said to occupy the same kind of objective physical space as the pen itself. (I can imagine the pen remaining a real object unperceived, but not my sensations of it.) We can, by this discriminative activity, detach aspects of the pure-experience pen and build fields of relations around them, like we were detaching a membrane or film from the object in front of us. As the diagram shows, it is easy to regard this new field as a medium through which we must look to perceive the object as it exists *an sich*.

The positive aspects of this account primarily concern its flexibility and pragmatic dimension. James attempts to paint a picture that does not have 'native' ontological distinctions, characterizing these instead as functional relations, derived from contingent human interests and applied in the common world over time. Such a picture makes traditional epistemological problems such as the problem of other minds and that of the external world look like less of a worry. If ontology is flexible and contingent, we can adjust our ontological scheme to overcome difficulties. This strategy has a further pragmatic element to it: problems can be left hanging if they do not interfere with our projects and interests (thus James has no problem with 'talking with the vulgar' about secondary qualities), or they can be overcome by incorporating divergent fields *within* a new conceived domain. Just as a psychologist can take a subject, his perceptions, and his memories as forming a larger system, where the psychologist knows things (*i.e.*, relates experiences) in ways the amnesiac subject cannot, so the philosopher can subsume, *e.g.*, inner and outer worlds in a larger system such as a world of pure experience. This system, to survive, must itself speak to the diverse interests of the philosopher. That is, it must address problems that cannot be left 'dangling', to use Herbert Feigl's term. I have tried to address in chapter two how this particular metaphysical picture addressed issues of concern to James.

In what we have of James's analysis (he conceivably could have continued the project), these concerns about how to characterize ambiguous experiential fields tend to address two matters. Perception was analysed in order to undermine dualism and representative theories of knowledge, in favour of James's pragmatic (functional) model, which he thought avoided sceptical and solipsistic conclusions. In addition to this topic, James tried to account for affects as something other than purely mental events. His analysis portrayed them as equivocal regarding the distinction between psychic and bodily processes, and again the overall aim was to show that conative and volitional events were public in an important sense.[49]

Wittgenstein's exploration of language games and subsequent exploration of the varieties of meaningful language use extends this line of investigation to include, among other things, thinking as a process that we are tempted to detach from public activities like speech. Thought becomes seen as a pseudolinguistic membrane, or better, an atmosphere that hovers over linguistic performances, giving them meaning. The picture Wittgenstein gives us in his investigation of the relationship of thought to its forms of expression bears strong similarity to James's accounts of perceiving and affective events, and can be seen as an important extension of a radical empiricist analysis of the mind.

The Aspect of Thought

In the sections 327*ff.* Wittgenstein engages in an investigation regarding thought and speech. The basic point of the excursion is to upset the Augustinian picture of language. We do not have a primordial 'inner language' that we learn to connect to a public language; rather, we are trained to initiate and recognize meaningful speech *and then* we might learn to speak 'inwardly'. (This line of thought is dependant upon an earlier discussion, *viz.*, the phenomena surrounding learning to read with and without speaking, which is carried out at §§156-182.) The clue to Wittgenstein's view actually occurs earlier, at §318:

> Suppose we speak or write thoughtfully[50]—I mean, as we normally do—we shall not in general say that we think quicker than we talk; the thought seems *not to be separate* from the expression. On the other hand, however, one does speak of the speed of thought; of how a thought goes through one's head like lightning; how problems become clear to us in a flash, and so on. So it is natural to ask if the same thing happens in lightning-like thought—only extremely accelerated—as is the case with speech that is not thoughtless[51]. So that in the first case the clockwork runs down all at once, but in the second bit by bit, braked by the words.

The salient point here is that despite cases where we talk of thought occurring wordlessly, the paradigmatic instances of thought occur in a fully integrated form with the linguistic expressions of thought. There is not

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[49] That this point needs to be made is due to the legacy of Descartes, who defined *res cogitans* as active and immaterial as opposed to the passive character of *res extensa*.
[50] Here I have altered Anscombe's translation, following an observation made by Hacker (3:340).
[51] Again, a minor alteration. See *ibid.*

separation the majority of the time. (However, this remark also points to the heteronomy of cases of 'thinking'.) Limiting his discussion to linguistic thought, Wittgenstein makes his point clear at §329: "When I think in language, there aren't 'meanings' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions: the language is itself the vehicle of thought." Thoughtful speech, when it occurs, constitutes an event with which we are quite familiar; out of this event we can isolate things we wish to go on to discuss. This leads to other, familiar language games such as rephrasing a thought, expressing it in a gesture instead of words, rehearsing or experimenting inwardly with a phrase before speaking it, explaining to someone what they intended to say, and so on. These all emerge from simpler games with language, the ones acquired earliest in language-learning. Of the integration of thought and its expressions in performance, Wittgenstein was emphatic that this was not to be understood in terms of a native dualism:

> While we sometimes call it "thinking" to accompany a sentence by a mental process, that accompaniment is not what we mean by a "thought".—Say a sentence and think it; say it with understanding.—And now do not say it, and just do what you accompanied it with when you said it with understanding!—(Sing this tune with expression. And now don't sing it, but repeat its expression!—And here one actually might repeat something. For example, motions of the body, slower and faster breathing, and so on.) (§330)

The point here is that separation of the expression from the phrase (or the tune) can be done, but it is an addition to the original scene, not a separation of a necessary element from an unnecessary one. The comparison with music—which is pervasive throughout this and similar sections of *Investigations*—is crucial, because it underscores the way in which meaning is akin to physiognomic 'interpretations' we see when we regard human beings.

The conclusion of this line of investigation is a stipulation to reign in our use of 'thought' as a philosophical concept. "Speech with and without thought is to be compared with the playing of a piece of music with and without thought." (§341; *cf.* §527) This is a frequent, pragmatic tactic of Wittgenstein's: he finds the everyday sense conditions of a philosophical or psychological term, and returns us to that context of application. What is especially noteworthy about Wittgenstein's diagnosis (and which has hitherto been overlooked by scholars) is the extent to which this notion of 'grammatical confluence', or partial grammatical similarity between psychological phenomena, yields a picture similar to James's. After all, James was concerned with similar philosophical obstacles, such as the notion that an object couldn't be 'in the mind' and 'out there in the world', that two minds could not make contact with one another, and with the idea that our knowledge of physical objects was derived by inferences made from sensational data.

The theme of overlapping language games, or the confluence of aspects of their grammars recurs throughout the remainder of *Investigations*. The treatment of imagining visual images at 370*ff*., calculating in the head (§385), the 'visual room' of §§398-402, and so on.[52] The surview of this phenomenon is given clearest expression at page 220: "Silent 'internal' speech is not a half hidden phenomenon which is as it were seen through a veil. It is not hidden *at all*, but the concept may easily confuse us, for it runs over a long stretch cheek by jowl with the concept of an 'outward' process, and yet does not coincide with it" (discussed above, chapter 3.) Thus we might portray Wittgenstein's analysis of the family of language-games concerning thoughtful speech thusly:

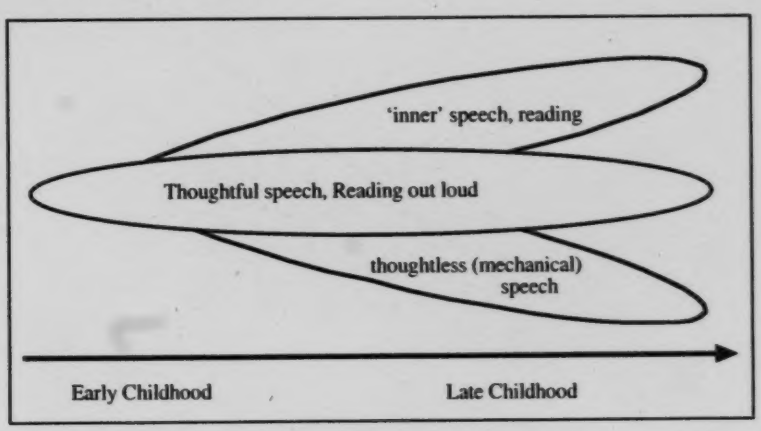

Figure 4-6: Emerging Speech Abilites

In this diagram the overlapping games of inner speech and mechanical speech do not emerge from the initial, primitive language-events of the child acquiring language. Such games become distinguished from the paradigmatic cases of language-use as the user displays sophistication. Thus, there is no possibility of a child's speaking mechanically until it has gained mastery over the verbal inflections and other nuances that characterize meaning what is said, apart from mimicry or the perceived crudeness of a toddler's utterances.

If we characterize the overlap of language games in the same manner as James's overlapping fields of experience, we have a useful picture of Wittgenstein's philosophical descriptions of the 'natural history of human beings.' We furthermore have a picture with greater detail and plausibility than James's. Wittgenstein's language games have the features necessary to give a vague depiction such as a field a character and coherence distinguishing it from its surroundings. Language games have objects and rules of grammar, and secondary games provide definite means of relating the content of one game to another (*e.g.*, if the game of 'pointing to the pen' is disturbed by the recognition that the pen is not in the vicinity, the

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[52] This technique carries over into Part Two, *e.g.*, the discussion of the "complicated relation" between the language games of sense impressions and those involving physical objects (p. 180).

game of 'giving directions to where the pen probably is' may supplant the primary game.) Note that in the case of games attempting to locate sense-impressions in the physical world (or, alternatively, inside the head) or giving a single definition of 'the function of language', *i.e.*, typical philosophical tasks, these means of relating one game to another are not perspicuous or unambiguous. It is likewise unclear in many cases whether finding such a relation is a discovery or the founding of a new convention. This leads one back to old difficulties about the connections between language and the world.

Wittgenstein's Realization of the Jamesian Picture

During his attempt to formulate a primary language, Wittgenstein began to recognize the heterogeneity, and perhaps more importantly the transience, of the phenomena of life. In "Some Remarks on Logical Form" he described the problem thusly:

> "If, now, we try to get at an actual analysis [of phenomena], we find logical forms which have very little similarity with the norms of ordinary language. We meet with the forms of space and time with the whole manifold of spatial and temporal objects, as colours, sounds, *etc.*, *etc.*, with their gradations, continuous transitions, and combinations in various proportions, all of which we cannot seize by our ordinary means of expression." (*Philosophical Occasions*, p. 31.)

By the time Wittgenstein had abandoned work on *Investigations* (ca. 1949/50) his picture of both language and the psychological phenomena we express has become even more complicated and confusing. We have secondary language games supervening on simpler forms of expression; there are physiognomic aspects of a variety of things, which play an enormously important role in our recognition of many things around us. Moreover, language games use a single term or phrase in a host of different ways, sometimes clearly differentiating themselves, other times not. Some deeply ingrained games in our particularly sophisticated form of life, such as intending, or recalling that one meant to say such-and-such, display an ersatz kind of duration, not completely isomorphic with genuine duration. Finally, to make matters more daunting for the philosophically inclined, Wittgenstein points out that judgements of the correctness of a locution are local, pragmatic decisions. We cannot appeal to a global concept, rule or logic of language to settle our differences. What are we to make of all this?

The *via negativa* in Wittgenstein's work is clear enough: we cannot espouse a psychophysical dualism, nor can we embrace a materialistic behaviourism. Each position is an oversimplification, fraught with difficulties resulting from ignoring the grammatical similarities and differences between the many kinds of discourse found in psychology and mental life generally. Confusion over the relation between emotions and their criteria and symptoms, for example, tempt us to break apart a functioning context of expressing one's feelings (or, alternatively, trying to conceal them) in order to put the explanatory burden on one or more of the parts of that context. David Pears sees this as symptomatic of most traditional philosophy. On

his view, the two cardinal philosophical errors Wittgenstein attacks are otherworldliness (as found in realism), and asking too much of the mundane world, the fault of traditional empiricism. "The first of the two kinds of theory reaches beyond the phenomena and postulates something transcendent to explain them, while the second kind ascribes a transcendent function to something ordinary and familiar."[53] The Scylla and Charibdis Wittgenstein tries to elude are two modes of projecting something extraordinary onto a familiar scene.

If a neutral approach is going to avoid these errors, it is important not to give in to this 'transcendental urge.' I would argue that James's version of radical empiricism makes the second of these two moves, insofar as his picture of ejective fields of pure experience are held together. Particularly in the *Principles*, but also in the later writings, we find James earnestly attempting to explain the continuity of the stream of thought. Thus we find him explaining the continuity of time: "In the same act by which I feel that this passing minute is a new pulse of my life, I feel that the old life continues into it, and the feeling of continuance in no wise jars upon the simultaneous feeling of a novelty." (ERE 46-47) As an account of our moment-to-moment awareness, this seems wrong. As Wittgenstein pointed out in his criticisms of James, we do not need constant feelings of continuity or connection to think, speak or refer. We just do these things.[54] Appealing to fringes of a thought, or feelings of tendency, to explain the movement of our thinking lives is—as Pears noted earlier—to assign a transcendent function to a mundane part of our world. I think James can be defended on this to an extent, particularly because he can cash out the meaning of his claims about feelings in terms of functional relations: his biological account is not as transcendent a role as a first glance might indicate. But Wittgenstein's point about 'feeling' and 'tendency' remains: only in unusual circumstances do we pause and attend to these feelings. Ordinarily we remember things, express our intentions, find missing words, *etc.*, without looking inward for a sign we're getting it right.

It would be fairer to James to reject the picture of such feelings as 'mental talismans' and restore his proper meaning: such feelings are dim cues, associations entering into the periphery of consciousness as part of a habitual process making itself felt. We 'know how to go on', and the feeling of this familiarity comes with the performance. This view takes James out of the imagistic empiricist camp and into that of pragmatic empiricism. But there is another problem in store: if such things are dimly felt, and the previous learning is what causes us to form the sentence, or reconstruct the memory, then what do we need the feeling for? Isn't it an epiphenomeon after all? James's fault is in overlooking the dynamic aspects of his own philosophy, and seeking a marker or phenomenon *in each passing moment* connecting past, present, and

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[53] Pears, *The False Prison*, 2:222.

[54] It is tempting to remind James of his own defence of this view. In a footnote (*ibid.*, 57) James criticizes F. H. Bradley for "looking behind a fact *in esse* for the ground of the fact, and finding it in the shape of the very same fact *in posse*" He concludes by stating "[s]omewhere we must leave off with a *constitution* behind which there is nothing."

future. Certainly our notions of causality encourage such a move. But Wittgenstein is truer to agnostic phenomenalism in rejecting this course.

Norman Malcolm's comments on this explanatory temptation are worth considering:

> "It is remarkable that philosophers seeking an understanding of the mental concepts, have lost sight of *the bearer* of mental predicates. Descartes held that an invisible, intangible, immaterial mind is that which thinks, wills, suffers. Present-day philosophy has justifiably turned away from the Cartesian view, but has proposed instead something equally absurd, namely, that the human brain, or even the computational states of machines, are the bearers of mental predicates. It is as if philosophers *could not believe* that the living corporeal human being is the subject of those predicates."[55]

James's statement of radical empiricism is well-suited to such a human conclusion to debates about the nature of the mind. But his picture, I contend, got the better of him in one, if not two respects. First is the point about using feelings to provide continuity to the field of our experience[56]. As his statement of radical empiricism indicates, James does not need total continuity of experience. Rather, his wording suggests a considerable tolerance of discontinuity.[57] But his imagery belies this. His simile of a mosaic, with each experience hanging on to its neighbours 'by its edges' requires James to find something in each moment binding it to other experiences. As a concept-using creature (and one embodied, to boot), James has options available to him other than feelings of connection. We could just *arrive* at a new moment in time, aware of new objects and interests, with no recollection or feeling of how we got there. If explanations were then sought, one could find relations, surely, to other things in the world, or other people, to lead us back across the phenomenal gap. We may also find subsequent pathways back via memory, but these too James tended to characterize in terms of 'feelings of pastness', when he could have had a more faithful phenomenalist point of view and just called memories 'reactions'[58] we have, which orient us towards a concept of the past.

The second problem for James is his overall characterization of life, the world, *etc*., as a domain of 'experience.' James's own dissatisfaction with his terminology may indicate the provisional nature of such a category, but a single category, like a single picture, is capable of distorting our view of what is, after all, simply *everything*.[59] The two problems contribute to the same end: a portrait of life that does not divide the world up into seen and unseen, or apparent and real. It is a portrait that breaks with a great number of traditional protopictures which have guided philosophical thought throughout its history. But it is a portrait

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[55] Malcolm and Armstrong, *Consciousness and Causality*, p. 100.
[56] This phrasing may remind the reader that James's work did not only find expression in Wittgenstein's writing. Aron Gurwitsch's *The Field of Consciousness* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1964) is a phenomenological development of James's pure experience.
[57] Some of the most tolerant comments occur in "A World of Pure Experience."
[58] See *Investigations*, §343*ff*.
[59] *Cf*. W. V. O. Quine, "On What There Is", *From a Logical Point of View*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1953.)

that depicts the world, and our view within it, as more homogenous and continuous than it really is. A truly empirical kind of radicalism must show more fidelity to its subject matter.

James's error can be seen by looking at particular psychological verbs. On Wittgenstein's view, an empiricist of vaguely Jamesian stripes tries to make the immanent realm too continuous by postulating feelings to give psychological verbs such as 'to intend' an apparently genuine duration. The solution is to describe their actual grammar, which reveals the lack of genuine duration, and allows us to avoid the strange notion of intentions being continuous activities or sensations. James's attempt to weave a metaphysical picture yielding immanentism and mind/body coextension was too dogmatic, and where he postulated in order to explain, Wittgenstein chose the more 'strenuous' option of conjoining phenomenalism with descriptive naturalism: Wittgenstein abandons explanation in favour of perspicuous descriptions, and leaves us with a 'patchwork' universe, complete with gaps. This is, I contend, the more faithful rendering of the radical empiricist project.

Having made these remarks, it is important once again to clarify the relation between Wittgensteinian criticisms of radical empiricism and Wittgenstein's modifications thereupon. If we do not have feelings or experiences guiding us from one utterance to the next, how do things hang together? On Wittgenstein's view, the only appeal is to our having acquired a language. Language transforms a human being into a creature that reacts linguistically: it complains when in pain, reports afterimages during retinal fatigue, describes memories of past events, anticipates future ones, and expresses intentions, emotions, and abstract ideas. These are performed with no more awareness than occurs during walking (which is also the execution of quite a complicated 'motor programme', from the neurologist's perspective.) If we want to elicit the structures guiding such activity, these spring forth as statements about the rules of grammar, which are themselves performances in the here and now, which may change the aspects under which we view a remembered event. This is a radical empiricism with less transcendence built into it, with greater discontinuity, and given Wittgenstein's picture of psychological grammar, less uniformity. If we were to try to portray a pure-experience thought-experiment in the manner of James, we might emphasize the addition of greater diversity and temporal discontinuity. (See Figure 4-7, Appendix) Such an attempt does not produce the desired results, for the heterogeneous grammars Wittgenstein describes do not admit of a simple, two-dimensional rendering.

Painting a New Picture: An Agnostic Phenomenalist View of Psychology

Peter Hacker talks about a misconception common to many psychologists (he cites Köhler, specifically) where psychology is seen as isomorphic with physics, insofar as they both have clear domains, within which one investigates states, events or processes. (Hacker notes Wittgenstein's criticism of this notion at §571.) Psychology seems to operate at greater remove, as the phenomena of psychology cannot be clearly

observed, only their behavioural symptoms can. Of course this raises comparisons with difficult observations in physics, such as the need to construct cloud chambers or accelerators to observe the 'behaviour' of subatomic particles. Wittgenstein had much to criticize in such a view. Hacker claims Wittgenstein called this "'the old conception' of psychology, of which he remarked that it is characterized by a *picture*: that of seeing, observing, an object which does not have its place among physical objects but elsewhere."[60] This is the picture of the mental as a hidden world, and it is a picture radical empiricism was designed to overcome, without reducing the phenomena of this world to the world of physics.

If we replace this picture, as both James and Wittgenstein did in the close of their careers, with a view of mental phenomena as *aspects of situations* that also admit of physical descriptions, the mystery of the place of mind in the world seems to disappear. Whether you declare ontological neutrality, as James did in his radical empiricist doctrine[61] of pure experience, or, as Wittgenstein attempted, you portray mental events as a diverse family of situations essentially caught up with public, physical events (deictic gestures, pointing to expressions, aspects of bodies, *etc.*), the result is the same. Nothing is hidden. James replaced a model of observing mental events with one of interacting with the objects of cognition, and thus whether that object ends up being the center of a physical, psychological or some other investigation is a function of the kind of interaction that ensues. The context that actually happens is what tells us what that experience really turned out to be. Such an 'encounter' has bound up with it a point of view: in Edelman's terminology, we have a conscious 'scene' which is as much constituted by the manner of selection and arrangement executed by the observer as it is by the 'objects' the observer sees. Such a view preserves the first-person perspective found in phenomenalism: that perspective is an unavoidable part of the scene. Hence, we must 'build' objectivity outwardly from our experiential location. We do this by projecting our concepts onto perceptual experience, which is a radical transformation of it. Out of our early attempts to navigate our 'econiche' we grow to postulate a larger world which re-orients our local viewpoint, as something moving within the world, or having a perspective on some part of it. This occurs as we are brought into the community of language-users. Such a view puts mental phenomena like consciousness on the same footing as physical phenomena: each is a product of this growth of awareness. As Thomas Nagel puts it, "the subjectivity of consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality—without which we couldn't do physics or anything else—and it must occupy as fundamental a place in any credible world view as matter, energy, space, time and numbers."[62] As for Wittgenstein, context plays a similar role, though ontology is of less concern than the grammar of the (linguistic) interactions that emerge. The ontology of a world will manifest itself in grammar, as language casts a kind of 'shadow' upon its referents, colouring or altering our view. The phenomena we call 'mental' are private only in a grammatical sense[63] and are shared

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[60] Hacker, 4:405.
[61] The very co-existence of the terms 'empiricist' and 'doctrine' underscores James's final difficulty.
[62] *The View From Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) pp. 7-8.
[63] Mental states are tied to 'my-ness' if you like, having relations to biographies, and the grammar of performing an utterance, some phenomena being private in virtue of standing public practices of concealing

through public phenomena that 'are' (if we want to use the language of ontology) simply subtle features of our environment, including most notably our bodies. By analogy, we might consider the new relation between psychology and physics to be more like that of musical composition (which includes systematic bodies of knowledge like harmony and counterpoint) to acoustics, than a relation like that holding between physics and chemistry. Music and its physics both use sound waves, but the grammar of the two fields is vastly different, and the connections between them are numerous.

This is a robust picture of radical empiricism. There is neutrality at the global level, but realism at the local level of selective interest, attention and grammar. It is a portrayal of human life that renders faithfully the contexts which contribute to meaning, and captures the plurality of form we see in the many functions of the parts of our language. The world of the mind is no longer characterized as a hidden realm, but as part of a phenomenal 'scene' with functional relations to the rest of reality. Possessing the higher-level forms of consciousness which are the fruit of our linguistic abilities, we postulate a larger world, locating our subjective sense of time and place within a larger history, a larger conceptual world. That world 'overrules' our native perceptions in ways similar to how abstracted concepts like 'necessity' come to govern our particular claims: they govern in the form of rules. Much of this is made possible by the human element of our context: our interactions with other speakers change and modulate our expressions and declarations. Human beings, the history of human languages, and the ways in which we have been educated to deal with the world combine with things around us to form the complex field in which life unfolds. We need no other support.

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bodily reactions, expressions, and of not allowing grammatical room for doubting an expression. This is a view that affords asymmetrical grammatical 'spaces' for many mental predicates.

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Appendix 1: James's list of worlds

The following is a list of conceptual realms given by James in the chapter, "The Perception of Reality", *Principles*, pp. 921-922:

> "1) The world of sense, or of physical 'things' as we instinctively apprehend them, with such qualities as heat, color, and sound, and such 'forces' as life, chemical affinity, gravity, electricity, all existing as such within or on the surface of the things.
> 2) The world of science, or of physical things as the learned conceive them, with secondary qualities and 'forces' (in the popular sense) excluded, and nothing real but solids and fluids and their 'laws' (i.e., customs) of motion.
> 3) The world of ideal relations, or abstract truths believed or believable by all, and expressed in logical, mathematical, metaphysical ethical, or aesthetic propositions.
> 4) The world of 'idols of the tribe,' illusions or prejudices common to the race. All educated people recognize these as forming one sub-universe. The motion of the sky round the earth, for example, belongs to this world. That motion is not a recognized item of any of the other worlds; but as an 'idol of the tribe' it really exists. For certain philosophers 'matter' exists only as an idol of the tribe. For science, the 'secondary qualities' of matter are but 'idols of the tribe.'
> 5) The various supernatural worlds, the Christian heaven and hell, the world of the Hindoo mythology, the world of Swedenborg's *visa et audita*, etc. Each of these is a consistent system, with definite relations among its own parts. Neptune's trident, e.g., has no status of reality whatever in the Christian heaven; but within the classic Olympus certain definite things are true of it, whether one believe in the reality of the classic mythology as a whole or not. The various worlds of deliberate fable may be ranked with these worlds of faith—the world of the *Iliad*, that of *King Lear*, of the *Pickwick Papers*, etc.
> 6) The various worlds of individual opinion, as numerous as men are.
> 7) The worlds of sheer madness and vagary, also indefinitely numerous.
>
> *Every object we think of gets at last referred to one world or another of this or of some similar list.* It settles into our belief as a common-sense object, a scientific object, an abstract object, a mythological object, an object of someone's mistaken conception, or a madman's object; and it reaches this state sometimes immediately, but often only after being hustled and bandied about amongst other objects until it finds some which will tolerate its presence and stand in relations to it which nothing contradicts."

For a more 'conceptual' take on worlds and world-making, where Cassier rather than James is the inspiration, see Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978.)

Appendix 2: The Genesis of *Philosophical Investigations, 1*

The following is a schematic rendering of the manuscript and typescript material comprising Investigations, Part One.

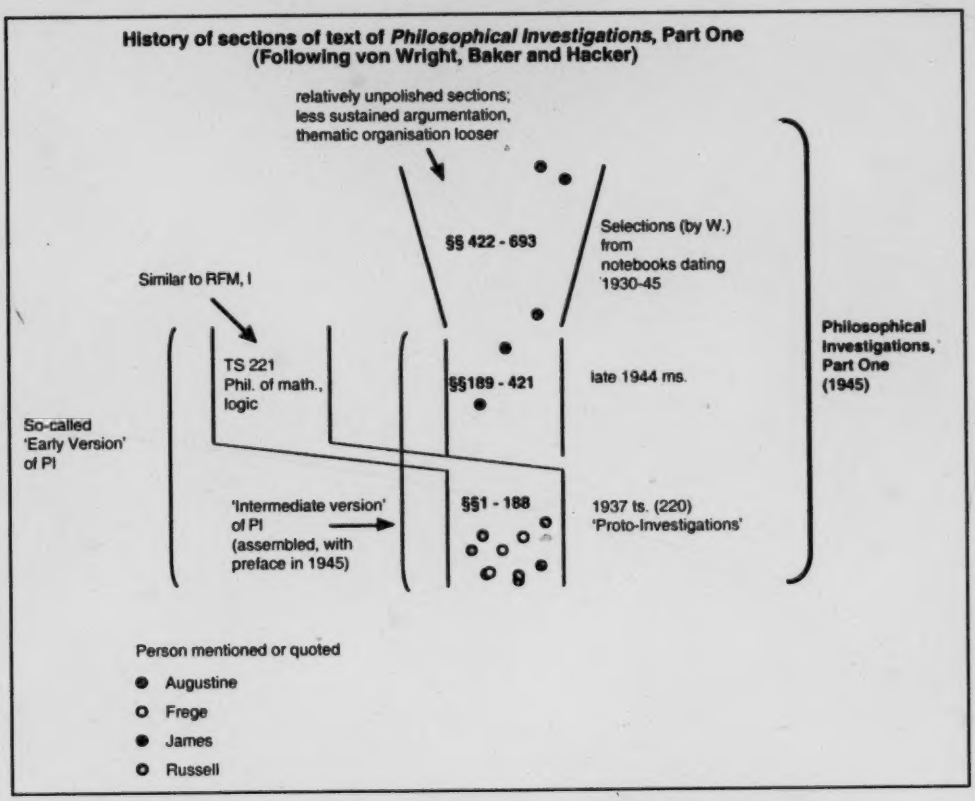

Figure 3-2: Analysis of Textual Sources of Philosophical Investigations
(Not shown: *Investigations*, Part 2)

It is noteworthy that references to James occur in the material replacing much of the earlier remarks on philosophy of mathematics, as part of Wittgenstein's overall drift towards philosophy of psychology in his later career.

Appendix 3: Radical Empiricism in the form of Language-games

We might construe Wittgenstein's notion of interrelating language-games as a portrait amenable to James's diagramming technique. This (figure 4-7) is an attempt involving James's familiar pen.

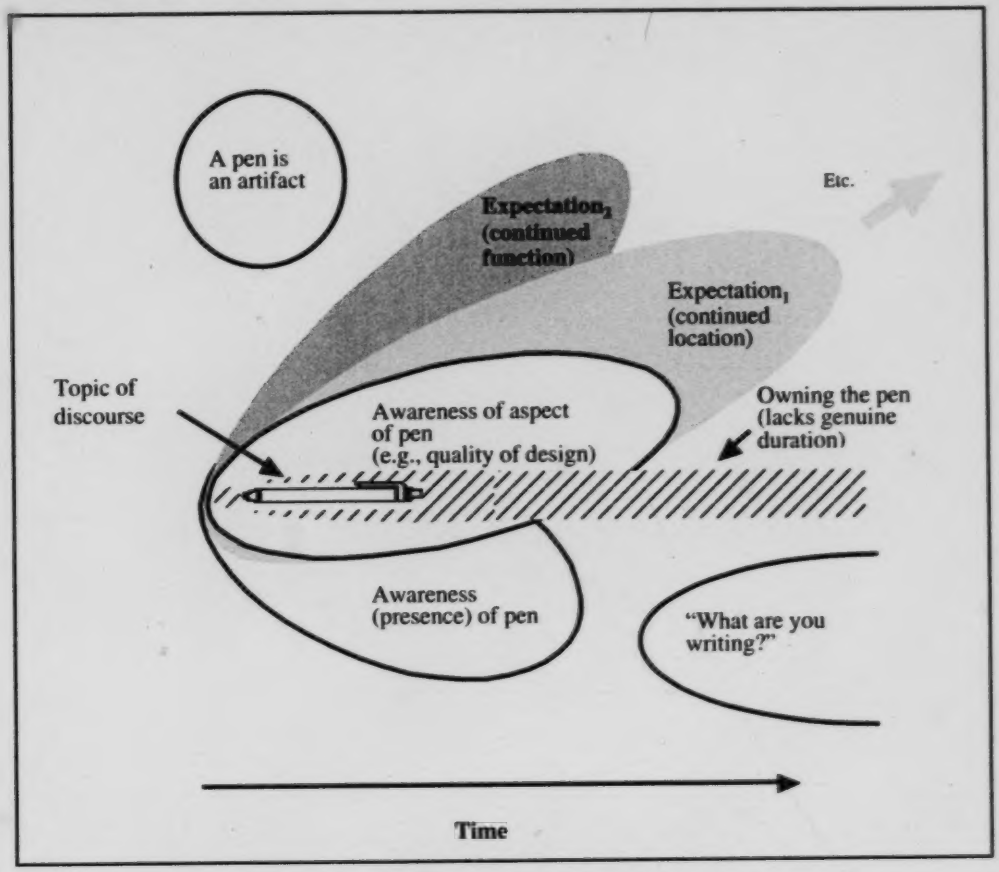

Figure 4-7: Language games as interrelating fields

Several possibilities present themselves in attempting to render Wittgenstein's views with a diagram such as this. Actual events in the specious present are marked by dark boundaries, thus we may portray a sensational 'bubble' within a larger conceptualized world. (*E.g.*, one's awareness that 'this is a well made pen' may come to an end, but the expectation that it will stay where it is put extends indefinitely into the future.) I have inserted an example of a new conversation erupting (Begun by the query: "What are you writing?") that would mark a new field, in a new location in time, which constitutes a new game involving the pen (in this case the pen's role would be minimal, but one could imagine the response "I'm not really writing, I'm just seeing if this pen still has ink in it.")

One of the disadvantages of displaying time as a single direction in the diagram is that is makes it difficult to include further language-games in any sensible way. Thus we might adjust our view by imagining the following figure serving as a grid overlaid on figure 4-7. (See Figure 4-8) With time once again portrayed as a radius, we can depict numerous language-games emerging out of the original 'pure experience pen', with the ontology that results being a function of the grammar of each particular game.

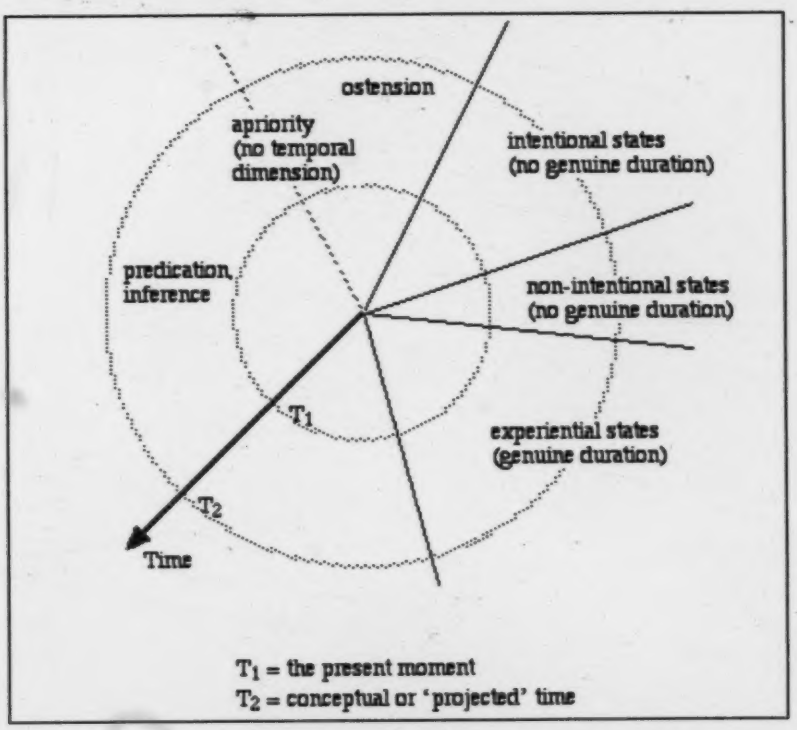

Figure 4-8: Temporal and Grammatical Grid for Pure Experience

Again looking at our grid, we can distinguish between kinds of games by dividing our field into sectors. We might have contingent sectors versus sectors reserved for invoking rules concerning mention of the pen, and boundaries could be drawn to illustrate the difference between genuine and ersatz duration, and other kinds of states, qualities, *etc*. If in a new moment the artifactual aspect of the pen is discussed, this might constitute an a prioi game involving the pen, which not only lacks genuine duration, but lacks any appearance of a temporal grammar. Still, we might have different uses within this domain, as I have tried to show by drawing a line demarcating ostension (using the pen as an example of what we mean by 'artifact') from predication and inference (invoking the fact that the pen is an artifact to assert relations the pen must have, or to make an inference about the pen.) While such diagramming is not essential to the explication of radical empiricism attempted above, it is hoped that this will be a useful contribution to future endeavours related to the depiction and analysis of theories of experience, meaning and existence.